



THE  
MEMOIRS OF  
COUNT BERNSTORFF



COU 'T BEHVNSTOPP

THE  
MEMOIRS  
OF  
COUNT BERNSTORFF



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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN  
BY ERIC SUTTON

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TO

MY DEAR BRAVE WIFE

WHO HAS COURAGEOUSLY BORNE WITH

ME ALL THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LIFE



## FOREWORD

AN uncanonical tradition records a question by the Almighty at the entrance to Paradise: "Where wert thou when the Lord God created the world?" Similar reflections cannot be far from the mind of any German who has to look back to-day on twenty-two years of war and revolution, and asks himself the question: "Where wert thou when the German people had to go through a purgatory of twenty-two years?" I answer this question on my own behalf in the following book, which may be regarded as my confession. If, notwithstanding age, ill-health and disgust with politics, I have been able to complete the work, my thanks are wholly due to the help given to me by Fraulein Myriam Becker, whose youthful energy and enthusiasm never failed throughout. It gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to offer her, in this place also, the expression of my gratitude.

J. BERNSTORFF.

*Geneva.*

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## CHAPTER I

### YOUTH

THE course of events made it necessary for me to publish a volume of my reminiscences very soon after the war, as I then felt it a duty to take up arms for the truth. The historian now recognises the attitude adopted by me in Washington to have been correct, while the layman is accustomed to pin his faith to the traditional party—or to purely national points of view. On that account, I can pass over most of the events described in my first book, assuming that everyone interested in that period will have read the literature that has since been forthcoming on the subject. It has confirmed my attitude throughout.

As in my first book, I shall adhere to my purpose of confining myself to my own personal experiences, so that this book, too, will contain nothing but what is unconditionally true. Regarding subjective views and values there may be differences of opinion, but facts should be unassailable. It is only thus that the book can fulfil its aim of providing a contribution to world history, as far as may be—*sine ira et studio*. It is not pleasant for a German to write the history of my generation. When I entered upon “the struggle that is life,” the Germany of Wilhelm I and Bismarck was at the peak of its fortunes. Compared with that glorious age, we are in the position of the prodigal son, who squandered his inheritance. Considered historically, the human material of the age of Wilhelm II appears just as good or just as bad—in whichever way it be regarded—as that with which Bismarck had to work. “The parts were there indeed, but where was the intellect that shaped them into one?” The later epoch lacked the genius of Bismarck, who recognised the great

historical truth of the primacy of foreign policy. Whoever wishes to lead the German people with success must always remember the geographical position of the country, which is decisive. It was on that account that Bismarck suffered from what he called "the nightmare of coalitions." But on that account he was master of the situation, while in time to come, the Second Reich could not extricate itself from the net of an enemy coalition, indeed it actually helped to create that coalition by errors in its own foreign policy.

I, who was to survive into the present melancholy epoch of German history, was born of an old German diplomatic family in London (1862), where my father was Ambassador. My place of birth seems to have exercised a sort of predestined influence on my destiny, for the most important moments of my life have, in one way or another, been connected with England for good or ill. I became engaged to be married, and thus found my life's happiness, in the park of Hampton Court Palace. Later on, it so happened that Herbert Bismarck made a diplomat of me after a meeting at dinner at the British Embassy in Berlin and later still, when Prince Bülow wanted to do me a favour, he appointed me Counsellor of Embassy in London. Thence it was fated that, as the phrase goes, I should make a good career as a diplomatist, and acquire more insight into the English speaking world than is commonly the case among Germans.

Napoleon I once said at St. Helena. "You must either fight England or share the trade of the world with her; only the second alternative is to-day possible." It is easy to be wise after the event, and one may take occasion to doubt whether Napoleon's temperament, before St. Helena would ever have permitted him to come to a peaceful arrangement with any other Power. But the relations between Germany and England were not of this character. When I was Counsellor of Embassy in London from 1902 to 1905 there was no one at the Embassy who was not convinced that war between Germany and England was inevitable.

if the German naval programme was maintained. There were, however, possibilities of an understanding even as late as Lord Haldane's mission to Berlin. When this proved abortive, the world war was a certainty, for only England could prevent it, and England was no longer willing to do so, on account of the German fleet. Colonel House wrote to Wilson on May 29th, 1914: "Whenever England consents, France and Russia will close in on Germany and Austria,"\* and House was intimately acquainted with Entente circles. Ever since I came to the use of my political reason, it was my desire that Germany should live in amity with England. I considered an understanding was attainable, provided Germany were content to be a Land Power of the first rank, and did not want to attain the same position as a Sea Power. "*Qui trop embrasse mal étreint,*" was a common saying of Bismarck's. Having grown up in these views, it was my fate during the war to occupy a position that brought me into the sharpest conflict with England, for at Washington the diplomatic duel was almost exclusively between Germany and England. In this struggle England proved victorious, because the German Government did not realise that the war would be decided in Washington, while England was never in any doubt on this point and acted accordingly. Her victory was facilitated by the predominance of the English language. I fancy it would not be incorrect to say that the English language won the war. Thanks to its wide diffusion, the whole world saw, and still sees, through English spectacles. One must face these unpleasant facts in order to avoid such consequences as befell us in the world war. My

\* The reference is to a letter written from Berlin in *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Vol I, p 225. The paragraph in question runs as follows—

"The situation is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. Unless some one acting for you can bring about a different understanding there is some day to be an awful cataclysm. No one in Europe can do it. There is too much hatred, too many jealousies. Whenever England consents, France and Russia will close in on Germany and Austria. England does not want Germany wholly crushed, for she would then have to reckon alone with her ancient enemy, Russia, but if Germany insists upon an ever-increasing navy, then England will have no choice."

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problems were just the same when, after the English had won their victory, I had to leave Washington for my last diplomatic post in Constantinople, whence I had to withdraw before the arrival of the British fleet.

These experiences, however, do not alter the fact that Germany must now, after the war, and in quite different circumstances, win England's friendship. No other foreign policy is possible for us, as the French hegemony on the continent cannot last for ever, and an understanding with France remains impossible, because France does not want one, never has done so, and probably never will. Since the days of Henry IV, it is the quintessence of French foreign policy to keep Germany weak. This aim is nowhere more clearly revealed than in the memorandum written by Talleyrand for his own guidance at the Congress of Vienna. Anyone who has worked for a number of years at Geneva can be in no doubt that the foreign policy of France is unchanged. Whether, as to-day, it is described as 'security,' and whatever parties direct it, the result is always the same. In a certain sense, one cannot blame the French, for the Americans are not likely to win another war for them and a Napoleon I is just as rare as a Bismarck. However an honest faith in the conception of a League of Nations, which has been lacking since Wilson's day, presents an alternative solution.

The first ten years of my life were spent in England until my father died (1873). This was my first sight of death, a painful experience, but not one that really conveyed to me the significance of that event. For his surviving family the days of diplomatic splendour were ended. Only my eldest brother remained in the service for a time, while my mother withdrew to the family estate, Stuntenburg-on the Schallsee. Of my parents I have only the friendliest recollections: they were always exceedingly kind to me but when I, their seventh child was born, my father was fifty three and my mother forty two. This great disparity of age naturally affected the spiritual relations between us.

parents and myself. But my parents' house gave me an ideal in life; the ideal of a free German nation politically united under Prussian leadership. My parents' house was "pious according to the ancient usage." I was so brought up, but this influence did not endure; my religion became one "for private use," which did not involve a Church. I have always felt that religion speaks with an inner voice, nor, I think, have I ever come in contact with a Church that presented the Gospel in its purity. If I were now disposed to go to a service in a church, it would be to the little village church on a hill by the Schallsee, where my parents are buried and where I was confirmed. Below, by the lake, lies "the isle of joyous solitude," sung by Klopstock, and surrounded by the lovely bays of Schleswig-Holstein. I say with the poet: "Thy phantom shall never leave my spirit."

My first sojourn in England brought me, in addition to a knowledge of the language, many political and spiritual advantages in later life; it also laid the foundations of my political views, as I was thereby brought into contact with the Emperor Frederick and his circle. Many years afterwards, when steaming down the Bosphorus with the Emperor William II, he introduced me to someone in the words: "His father was my father's friend." This friendship is also confirmed by the fact that the then Crown Prince and Princess, his wife, often stayed with my father at the German Embassy in London. One of the reasons for that was Queen Victoria's holy horror that her son-in-law might smoke his pipe in one of her castles. This friendship with my family was maintained, and I owe to it many a favour in the past. The Emperor Frederick's death was certainly the most unhappy event in the later history of Germany. Under his rule the constructive genius of the nation would probably have found expression, which would equally have accomplished the western orientation of our foreign policy, and directed our home policy along the lines of evolution towards a Liberal Democracy. Instead of which came the crass materialism of the

age of William II, in which the pursuit of wealth extinguished all idealism, in politics and everywhere else. The Emperor Frederick is mainly known to the present age by his diary, in which the author's political attitude is very clearly displayed. It is important because the historian is thereby led to the conclusion that a western orientation of our foreign policy, combined with a Liberal development at home, would have preserved the Hohenzollern Empire from defeat and revolution. There was probably no other method of preserving the German monarchy, and it would have been adopted by the Emperor Frederick. Particularism could not have held out against Imperialism backed by Democracy. A modified unification would have come about quite naturally as the result of decentralisation. It was not to be I am of course well aware that every such *ex post facto* judgment is no more than a hypothesis, though it is indeed advanced by every historian.

The Empress Frederick was—together with Frau Cosima Wagner—one of the most remarkable women I have been privileged to meet. In later years it was vouchsafed to me to break a lance for her reputation in history, when Emil Ludwig wrote his biography of the Emperor William II. I had seen a great deal of that eminent writer in Constantinople when he was there as war correspondent for the *Vossische Zeitung* and I was Ambassador. He came to see us at our then country seat on the Starnberger See, with the proofs of his book in a suitcase and asked me to check them for actual historical errors. I then read the whole book and we agreed on certain alterations but on two main questions Ludwig would not budge. As Jacob contended with the angel so did I with him—first, that he should not publish the book and when he would not yield on that point that he should alter the whole passage about the Empress Frederick. I could not prevail on Ludwig, nor could Prince Hatzfeldt, whom he also consulted. But when Bismarck subsequently published the Empress's letters to her son her late &

## YOUTH

wrote a postscript to his book, which he sent me. This was a truly honourable palinode. I saw Queen Victoria only once, when she paid a personal visit of condolence to my mother after my father's death. When Emil Ludwig visited us at Starnberg on that occasion, we were able to admire his extraordinary dramatic talent. He described to us an evening with Maximilian Harden at Walter Rathenau's house, and so reproduced the expressions and words of all three that we could almost fancy them in the room.

To return to the moment when my mother, as a widow, took up her residence on the family estate at Stintenburg. I was provided with a tutor, but I learned very little. The woods were too lovely, besides I was very averse to any studies except history and literature. My mother was much too sensible and kind to take this very much amiss, and sent me to three successive schools, at none of which I much distinguished myself. And when in later life I came across any of my teachers or fellow-pupils, I was always met with a faint astonishment that I had done so well. I attended a preparatory school at Sulza in Thuringia, I was a boarder at the Vitztum Gymnasium in Dresden, and finally at the Gymnasium at our county town of Ratzeburg, where (1881) I passed my leaving examination. When I ask myself what was the permanent effect left on me by these schools, and the education I received there, I must confess that my memories of the first two institutions are unconnected with the establishments themselves. At the first, what I remember are my wanderings in the lovely Thuringian forest, and at the second, my Sunday evenings at the then magnificent Dresden Opera, with the incomparable Therese Malten at the zenith of her powers. At Ratzeburg matters were otherwise. I was at the age when a youth wants to get out of school into life. That desire—call it ambition if you like—produced in me all the energy that the school by itself was not able to inspire. So that day of my leaving examination was one of the happiest in my life. More-

over, I was relatively contented at Ratzeburg, as I could get home oftener than before. In those days, alas, there were neither bicycles nor motor cars. To-day the journey from Ratzeburg to Stintenburg would be merely a cat's jump, while then the choice lay between a horse's legs and one's own. The first cost money, and the radius of the last was limited. In later days, when I represented Schleswig Holstein for seven years in the Reichstag, I often felt glad I had been at school in the Province. In no other part of Germany is so much stress laid on local tradition, and thus Stintenburg and Ratzeburg played a certain part in my political equipment. But it was with a pure and profound emotion that, as an old man, I looked down from St George's Mount on the glorious cathedral in its magnificent island setting in the lake. Like the echo of ancient legend, first love and friendship rose before my mind.

Life now lay before me, though I was not yet conscious of any definite bent. I had an admitted taste for history, which I absorbed in English and French, as well as in German with an especial preference for Heinrich von Treitschke and Gustav Freytag. In my examinations this knowledge combined with a good memory, was my salvation for in Mathematics I was no use at all. On the other hand, I could say off by heart almost thirty odes of Horace, to the joy of my headmaster. Such was my training, but no decision had been reached as to a profession though this was a far simpler problem than it has since become. It was a tradition in aristocratic families that the eldest son who was to succeed to the family estate should prepare himself by a period of service in a Guard Cavalry regiment while the younger sons should, according to the family means, serve in a cheaper regiment or enter the Civil Service. My own inclinations would have led me into diplomacy as soon as possible but there was a trifling obstacle in the way which I was not able to remove until later on. A feud had arisen between us and the Bismarck family who after the statesman had been pro-

sented with the estate of Friedrichsruh, had become our near neighbours: a feud that I personally greatly regretted, owing to my heartfelt admiration for Bismarck's foreign policy. I mention this episode because it is very characteristic of that age. My eldest brother had been posted to Washington as Secretary of Legation. But as he there showed more interest in the Y.M.C.A. than in politics, his chief, Herr von Schlozer, had him recalled. My father was always on good terms with Bismarck, first as his chief and colleague, and finally as his subordinate, as is set forth at large in the book dedicated to him by Ringhoffer. My father was really the only one of Bismarck's colleagues who never fell out with him. In memory of those times Bismarck dealt with my brother's case in very friendly fashion by appointing him to the post of Landrat of the Ratzeburg district, which suited him much better than diplomacy, brought him nearer to Stintenburg, and introduced him to home politics. His interest in the latter induced him to stand for the Reichstag, but without success. At the next election he conceived the fatal idea of putting up Herbert Bismarck, in the assumption that his name and personality would be certain to secure him election. But Herbert Bismarck was, like my brother, beaten by a Radical. That was the end of Bismarck's favour. He had no use for a Landrat who was responsible for political mishaps of this sort, especially when they directly affected the Bismarck family. My brother received a sinecure in the Ministry of Public Worship, but every other member of our family was barred from service under the Foreign Department. After one of my other brothers had been explicitly rejected, there was no sense in my preparing myself for diplomacy. As a matter of fact the election result was not in itself remarkable, as almost the entire province was Radical in those days, mainly, in my opinion, from dislike of Prussianisation. The Schleswig-Holsteiners had always stood out for their Germanism as against Danish influence. In the words of the popular song of those days: "We won't be Danes,

we mean to be Germans," but they were not at all inclined to become patriotic Prussians.

It was, perhaps, a mistake on the part of Bismarck to have undertaken the incorporation of the 'sea gut Schleswig Holstein. Since the world war I have often wondered whether Schleswig Holstein would not be German to-day as far as the Königs Au if it had never become Prussian.

When my great grandfather Peter Andreas Bernstorff governed the land of Denmark there was not yet any Nationalism and there were no plebiscites. Germans, Danes and Norwegians lived peaceably side by side in one State, which possessed a certain importance in the world. Nationalism is, historically, a democratic invention, though the contemporary version of it is strongly inclined towards dictatorship. What would Ernst Moritz Arndt and Hoffmann von Fallersleben say if they dwelt among us to-day?

As diplomacy was closed to me for the time being I had to find another profession. My mother, kind as ever, gave me an entirely free hand. I never gave her greater pleasure than by my subsequent entry into diplomacy, for she lived wholly in my father's memory, and the hope that his sons would follow in his footsteps. Although I was myself quite clear that I was not cut out for a soldier, I joined the First Guard Field Artillery regiment because I wanted to be in Berlin, at the centre point of events, and so make use of every opportunity. I served with the regiment for eight years and although I did not care for soldiering I have none but pleasant recollections of my service. There was certainly no corps of officers who more faithfully preserved the ancient Prussian tradition. Duty was taken seriously, and social life in the mess was a model of its kind as simple and pleasant. Later on I much regretted having lost these connections on my entry into diplomacy but one of the disadvantages of the service is that it does not permit the individual to sink deep roots in any soil. The diplomat is like Waller's *entertainer*

"He has no settled quarters on the earth." But it has its good side in the resultant spiritualisation of his experiences. It is often urged against him that he tends to be a man without a country, but that is contrary to my experience. He is merely detached from the material side of life, in so far as he owes his allegiance not to any definite place or living people, but to the ideal, which is everywhere. I have always felt that to the question: "What is Germanism?" there was only one answer: "Goethe."

As a Guard officer, I had really nothing to complain of in the Germany and Berlin of those days. All doors and all approaches stood open to the uniform, and I was especially fortunate, as my mother used to come to Berlin for the winter, to put all her old connections at her children's disposal. Her views being what they were, these connections were not limited to the so-called Court Society, as my mother was far from wishing I should develop into a social snob. She wanted to give me all available opportunities, which I was to make use of as I thought fit. And so it came about that I, a young lieutenant, found my way into the sanctuaries of Berlin society of those days—as for instance, the Empress Augusta's Thursday evenings and Princess Marie Radziwill's salon. I was permitted to skate with the Crown Princess and her daughters on the Neue See in the Tiergarten, where the Crown Prince too sometimes appeared. In this connection I particularly remember the winter when I was at the Artillery School. Work was over at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the school was only a short distance away from the Neue See. I industriously frequented the ball-rooms of Court society, which means very little in comparison with the time in which I write, for in those days one only danced for three or four weeks in the year, during Carnival. Reischach, who later on was appointed Oberhofmarschall, was Master of the Ball-room Ceremonies, and kept his young men under the strictest discipline. He himself looked magnificent in the handsome uniform of the Garde du

Corps, and danced brilliantly. In those days people took very different views from those that are current to-day. A man who danced with a lady more than once in an evening was suspected of "serious intentions," and if the lady was married, of "dishonourable intentions." I may mention one episode at a Court ball which is rather significant to-day. It happened in the winter when the daughter of Bleichröder, the banker, came out. The young lady was quite unknown to the then very exclusive Court society; moreover there was a certain dislike of her father in officer circles, which Prince Bismarck was known not to share. Fräulein von Bleichröder was therefore in grave peril of being a wallflower at her first Court ball. However, the Crown Prince told the two officers whom he knew best, Reischach and myself, to dance with the lady which of course we did. I have no knowledge of Reischach's feelings on the subject, but the Crown Prince was well aware that I, like him, regarded anti-Semitism as a stain on the escutcheon of German culture.

My only memory of the old Emperor William I would be of an imposing figure taking the salute on the Tempelhofer Feld, had I not been brought into intimate contact with His Majesty by favour of the Lehndorff brothers. The Emperor used to visit Bad Gastein for a cure, where Count Lehndorff-Steinort owned a villa. Here the Emperor often spent the evening in the company of the Lehndorff and Hahn families. He was a man of touching simplicity of character and very fond of young people. To entertain the old gentleman—he was then eighty-six—amateur theatricals were arranged under the direction of Ferdinand von Strantz, Director of the Berlin Opera. It was in fact a sort of little Gastein season, and Count Lehndorff would invite me to stay for three or four weeks. I used to accept the invitation with delight, though it was difficult for a young lieutenant to get leave in the summer. However, General Adjutant Count Heinrich Lehndorff interceded with my commanding officer and it was a common joke in the Guard

Corps that I had been posted to Gastein for play-acting. I have a charming recollection of those weeks. The phrase, "Every inch a King," applied to William I as to no other monarch I have known. My acquaintance with him and his great Chancellor is among the most cherished memories of my youth, though owing to the difference in age the encounters could of course be no more than superficial. I met Prince Bismarck for the last time in the salon of Countess Schuvaloff, wife of the Russian Ambassador, where he appeared unannounced at one of her afternoon receptions, when only a few people were present.

Of quite another sort are my recollections of circles that did but touch the periphery of Court society. As I entered Frau von Helmholtz's drawing-room one evening, she came up to me with a smile and said: "You are the only uniform in the room. You will find none but enemies of the Reich here!" The reference was to the large circles of the intelligentsia who opposed the home policy of Bismarck, who did indeed blunder over the Socialist Law and the *Kulturkampf* but never injured Germany's soul.

I was most at home in the house of the famous Frau Mathilde Wesendonck, the original of "Isolde." After the Zurich period, which is part of musical history, the Wesendoncks moved first to Dresden and then to Berlin, where they gave wonderful evening receptions, mainly devoted to the cult of Wagner's works, in which the first artists in Berlin took part. It was shortly after the Master's death, when Frau Cosima had set to work to build up Bayreuth, and this was not done to order and with resources provided from above, as is the method nowadays, but by her own genius alone. I myself visited Bayreuth with the Wesendoncks in the year 1886 for the first time. In those days it was the spirit of the festival that attracted the audience, and not fashion. The Wagnerians were still rather ridiculed in Berlin, and Countesses Schleinitz and Szechenyi were called Schlein-hilde and Szechnyigunde, as being such fervent disciples, just as

the Wagner League was called the Von Wagner League, owing to its many aristocratic members. When I married Mathilde Wesendonck's niece, I became a member of the family to which I owe my life's happiness. The formal engagement took place, as I have mentioned, in England, where my parents in law had come to attend the ceremonies of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee. It was on that occasion that I saw the Crown Prince alive for the last time, riding in the procession. The hope of Germany still appeared before the world in glorious array, but the germ of disease was already gnawing at the handsome Crown Prince, as at the Reich itself.

My married happiness and the swift changes of scene in the year 1888 accustomed me to the idea of remaining a soldier and attending the Kriegsakademie, when one day I was sent for by my commanding officer. Freiherr von Neubronn was something of a martinet, and I was a far from brilliant soldier, so that it was with a certain misgiving that I put on my helmet to go to the orderly room, assuming that I was in for a bad quarter of an hour. What was my surprise when the Colonel told me that he wished to recommend me to the Military Cabinet for a post attached to an Embassy. He had received an application from the Cabinet, and I was the only one of his officers suited to the position. Moreover he was very anxious that such a post should be assigned to a member of the regiment. Believing as I did that my family was still out of favour with Prince Bismarck, I did not at all like the prospect of the appointment, which, at the best, could only be of short duration. In the twenty four hours which the Colonel allowed me to make up my mind, I talked the matter over with my wife, and finally accepted, because I did not want to make myself unpopular with Baron Neubronn. But the position of affairs was more favourable than I believed. It was Bismarck's policy to reinforce the diplomatic service from the army, which at that time monopolised almost the entire youth of Germany, and in the meantime I had constantly met the Prince's

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two sons in Berlin society. A few weeks later my wife and I were dining in Herbert Bismarck's company at the British Embassy, at one of those little Sunday dinners which Lady Emyntrude Malet was accustomed to give. In the smoking-room afterwards I asked the Secretary of State whether my appointment was likely to lead to anything. He was very friendly and said that I should be posted to Constantinople on October 1st, 1889. In later years I have been attacked by political opponents of my Reichstag election campaigns, on the ground that my wife was an American and that Bismarck had banned me from diplomacy for that reason. In certain circles historic truth is somewhat neglected, as the above account of the actual facts may serve to show.

## CHAPTER II

### YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP

WHEN the time came to set out for Constantinople we had a little daughter ten months old. The long railway journey seemed likely to be rather trying for her, so we chose the sea route, though, as it proved, we were much exercised over the difficulty of procuring the necessary milk at Trieste. However, the beauties of nature were a compensation for all discomforts. Trieste with Miramare, Corfu, Patras, Athens, and the approach to Constantinople, are all unforgettable pictures, with historic memories that reach back to Homer, of which we were more particularly reminded, as the famous archaeologist Schliemann and his family were on board. His attempts to converse with Greeks in ancient Greek and the Homeric names he had bestowed upon his children did much to enliven the voyage.

When an attaché sets forth into the world for the first time he often labours under many illusions regarding his future work. I, however, had been too familiar with diplomatic life from boyhood not to know that for many years a young diplomat can and ought to do nothing but learn, and must sustain himself on the political crumbs that fall from his chief's more or less well laden table. What I have here to say about Constantinople is the result of two periods of service, for it so happened that I began and ended my diplomatic career in that city. I am unacquainted with Mustafa Kemal's Turkey of to-day, so I will not offer any observations on his attempts at reform, they were largely the fruits of a military success which was not in the least surprising, as the Turk is the best soldier in the world, incomparably brave and hardy. But he needs good and suitable leadership, which

Kemal was able to provide; even in the war he was regarded among the German officers as the best Turkish general.

When I first arrived in Constantinople the Sultan Abdul Hamid was on the throne: one of the ablest diplomatists, and worst rulers, of the age. From the purely political point of view, however, perhaps he was right to devote all his abilities to an elaborate game of intrigue with all the European Powers. Old and decaying empires are apt to collapse when the hand of reform is laid upon them. The remark of Ricci, General of the Jesuits, might well have been applied to the Ottoman Empire: "*Sint ut sunt aut non sint.*" Whether or not Abdul Hamid realised the hopelessness of any reforms in Turkey, he never made any serious effort in that direction. When the German "reformers" of those days became too insistent with their good advice, he tried to put them off by the conferment of an order, or some more valuable indication of his favour, if only they could be induced to let well alone. He himself based the security of his Empire entirely on the mutual jealousy of the Great Powers. Towards his inferiors, Abdul Hamid was merely a brutal tyrant, whose cowardice bordered on persecution-mania. As a result of his fears, he kept all the Imperial princes, who stood anywhere near to the throne, imprisoned in their castles, and countless Osmanlis were condemned to death or banishment. From time to time his terrors gave rise to comic incidents. On one occasion, during my attaché years, when a young Hohenzollern prince was visiting Constantinople and dined with the Sultan, a light Oriental screen fell, and would have touched the Sultan had not the Prince held out his arm; for this service he was decorated with the Medal for Saving Life.

Twenty-eight years later, I, as German Ambassador, accompanied the fallen Abdul Hamid to his last resting-place. It was early spring; the sun shone from a deep blue cloudless sky on the magnificent spectacle of an oriental Imperial funeral which the Young Turk régime had staged for its bitterest enemy, from

mixed motives of generosity and political acumen, in an attempt to reconcile past and present. All the leaders of the Young Turks, who had robbed Abdul Hamid of the throne and kept him a prisoner until his death in one of the most splendid palaces of the Bosphorus, were there to pay him final honours. The latent contrasts of the ceremony had brought a vast concourse of people into the ancient streets of Constantinople, which glittered with all the varied hues of oriental garb and head gear. And the irony of history came into her own. As the Imam read out the prayers of the Moslem funeral rite, he addressed the usual question to the assemblage. "Was the dead man a good man?" and the "Big Three," Talaat, Enver, and Djemal Pasha, together with the other Young Turk leaders, replied with one voice: "He was."

During my time as an attaché in Constantinople I viewed the incomparable city and its environment with the eyes of care-free youth not yet burdened with political responsibility. My one desire was to get to know the country and the people, and to familiarise myself with the oriental attitude to life. Anyone who knows Turkey and Egypt, and is not hidebound by the prejudices of European hyper civilisation, must always long to submit his mind and his senses to the dreamlike poetry of the East. He will forget the dirt and the insects, the insipid Levantine imitation of Paris salons, and think only of the moonlit nights, the temples, the castles and the mosques, and the trips on the Bosphorus in a slim calque, when a light north wind crisps the deep blue water. The Orient seems eternally unchanged in spite of the efforts and activities of native and foreign governments. The classic letters of Moltke may, on that account, still serve as an introduction to the Near East. All innovations do but touch the surface, while the soul of the Orient abides in unshakable peace which gives ephemeral man a foretaste of eternity. When I was Consul General in Egypt I was sitting during one of those unforgettable sunsets in the company of a high English official at the feet of the

great sphinx of Gizeh. My companion, whose task it was to assist in the Europeanisation of Egypt, in the face of that age-long symbol of oriental powers of endurance, became possessed by the thought of the transitoriness of all political effort. He fell to reflecting how many foreign conquerors had looked upon the sphinx and how many more would pass it by. I could not help remembering the lines that Goethe puts in the mouth of the sphinx in *Faust*:

"We, the Pyramids before,  
Sit for judgment of the nations,  
War and peace and inundations—  
Change our features nevermore."

Whatever storms sweep across the Oriental world, it remains impassive, and says: "It is the will of Allah."

An attaché must never expect to be personally employed by his chief except perhaps in the capacity of *galopin*, as the French call it. I cannot therefore pretend to offer any judgment of our Ambassador, von Radowitz, as a diplomat. His career began by being meteoric, and then came to a halt. He had, in any case, already fallen out of favour with the Bismarck family, as was apparent from various incidents during the visit of the Emperor William II, and this, according to Prince Bulow's *Memoirs*, is to be ascribed to Holstein. It so happened that on both my years' sojourns at Constantinople we had a visit from the Emperor. On the first occasion I had barely arrived, and was so completely a novice that my astonishment was great when, at the time of leave-taking, Herbert Bismarck pressed my first decoration into my hand—the Order of the Crown, Fourth Class. His Majesty was always friendly to me, but I was never so intimate with the Emperor in Constantinople as in Berlin, where H.M. had done his service with my regiment, and one occasion I had acted as his orderly officer. When I informed H.M. that I was posted to Constantinople, the Kaiser said prophetically: "So you want to

become an Ambassador, I could only reply: "As Your Majesty pleases." The era of close Germano Turkish friendship had not then begun, and did not begin until the time when Freiherr von Marschall became Ambassador; Bismarck was still Chancellor, and would not have countenanced the relations that subsequently developed between the two countries. However, I was present at the inauguration of the first section of the Baghdad Railway, from Ismid to Sabandga. My youthful imagination was deeply impressed when I first left European soil to pass over into Asia.

A tragic comic episode of the Imperial visit was Her Majesty's reception in the Sultan's harem. The Empress had religious, or shall we say, moral scruples against a visit to a harem. After a prolonged and tearful conflict, Her Majesty allowed herself to be over persuaded by Herr Kögel, one of the Court chaplains in the Imperial suite, who maintained the view that the Sultan was permitted a harem by his religion.

Though, indeed, I had little to do officially with the Ambassador, the family life at the Embassy was extremely lively—more so than I ever met with again—and when we ourselves came to preside over an embassy, we took it as our model. Frau von Radowitz's maternal dignity caused her to be generally known at the Embassy as 'The Reichsmutter'. Her two charming daughters were about the same age as my wife, and became her warmest friends. When the East demanded its usual toll, and I went down with typhus while my wife was lying ill with measles, the Radowitz family took charge of our daughter at the Embassy, a kindness which I shall be grateful for all my life.

Otherwise, society at Constantinople was not particularly entertaining, as, by the customs of the country, it consisted solely of the Diplomatic Corps, together with a few Levantine families. At that time both the French and the Italian Ambassadors were very wealthy men—Baron Blanc and Count Montebello, or, rather, their wives were women of wealth, and kept open house accordingly. The result was that the little

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society met nearly every day, and so had not much left to talk about; this led to cards and gossip, which, according to Schopenhauer, is the bankruptcy of all ideas.

There was very little work for secretaries and attachés at Constantinople, as it was dealt with by the dragomans. The First Dragoman was, after the chief, and one might almost say, with the chief, the most important person at all the Embassies. Without him no Ambassador could enter the Sublime Porte or the palace. Our First Dragoman, Testa, was the best-known personality on the Bosphorus. He gave me a little work to do now and again, when he discovered that I could speak and write English and French, which he had not expected from a lieutenant of the Guard. I usually did my work with the Second Secretary, Carl Max Lichnowsky, with whom I remained on terms of friendship until his death. It was his duty to keep the political diary, and this he usually left to me; in itself a mechanical and monotonous task, it had the advantage of involving a knowledge of all political matter that entered and left the Embassy. We often rode together in the lovely Belgrade woods on the Bosphorus and as far as Kilia on the Black Sea. Life in Constantinople was, otherwise, rather devoid of interest, except for political activities, and these were monopolised by the Ambassador and the First Dragoman. Bismarck is alleged to have said that every Ambassador in Constantinople soon became afflicted with megalomania. They were, indeed, provided with a warship, a small steamer (*mouche*), Dragoman and Kavasses.

Work and diplomatic amusements were interrupted for two months by my attack of typhus, as after my recovery I was sent to convalesce at Prinkipo, the pearl of the Princes' Islands on the Sea of Marmora, where more famous men than I have sojourned, some as prisoners of war and some as political refugees. Just as I fell ill I heard the news of Bismarck's fall. I was merely a young and insignificant attaché, but the appalling event filled me with such horror and anxiety for my unhappy

country that my delirious ramblings dwelt on nothing else. When I look back to-day on the political consequences of that upheaval, it is indisputable that Bismarck, too, made mistakes—naturally enough, since we are all human, and spirit is inseparable from matter. But Bismarck's mistakes were almost entirely confined to the field of home politics, and the forbearance of the German people renders these easy to surmount. But mistakes in foreign politics, owing to our geographical position, produce a fatal and immediate effect. That is why Bismarck's heritage was so quickly squandered. Caprivi ought, of course, to have renewed the reinsurance treaty with Russia, since this was the only method of preventing a Franco-Russian alliance. The sacrifice of this treaty on our part inevitably led the Russian Government to believe that we intended to pursue an Austrian policy and not one that was mainly directed towards the maintenance of peace. From this consideration to the French alliance was but a step. Thenceforward there was only one possible policy for us, and that was to take a decisive turn towards England, which Caprivi, quite correctly, did. Only we should not have gone back to Russia later on, after the French alliance had come into existence, and so long as it lasted.

If to-day we try to imagine how Bismarck would have continued to direct our foreign policy, had he remained in office, it is to be assumed that he would have maintained the tie with Russia as long as possible, while cultivating good relations with England. That was his policy up to his dismissal. But if the day had come when Russian friendship could only have been obtained at the cost of the sacrifice of Austria Hungary, Bismarck would have made just as energetic and whole hearted a choice for England as he had done for Austria Hungary in the year 1879. By that means the world war could probably have been avoided, for the maintenance of peace was always, and quite rightly the beginning and the end of Bismarck's policy. But when the French lust for revenge, and Pan-Slav expansion,

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had combined to precipitate war, it would have been conducted on our side by the whole Triple Alliance, with English support. How different would the outcome then have been! Bismarck had set Germany in the saddle, but—alas!—she could not ride.

When my attaché year in Constantinople came to an end, on the Ambassador's recommendation I was posted to the Foreign Ministry to take my diplomatic examinations. Of those two years, until the summer of 1892 I have nothing to report, as I spent the time almost entirely at a desk. I worked first in the Legal and then in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Ministry, and finally at the subjects for my written examination. As I was well aware that I should always be at the disadvantage of having had a military and not an official training, I really worked very hard to make up for lost time and fill up the gaps. In the end I passed the examination and was "commended." The oral diplomatic test was by no means a simple one in those days; the solitary candidate sat confronted by a whole array of examiners under the chairmanship of Secretary of State von Marschall, and there was no knowing on what subject he might not be questioned. The attaché's sole salvation was the fact that in the Foreign Ministry the spirit of Bismarck still prevailed, and that it had already been decided before the oral examination whether the candidate should pass or not. Bismarck had written with his own hand, among the general instructions for the Diplomatic examination: "I reserve the right to accept the candidate for the Diplomatic Service if I think him suitable, though he may not have passed the examination." I shall never forget the kindness of old Rudolf von Gneist, a famous figure in his time, in trying me first with quite easy questions and then passing on to harder ones, when he saw that I really did know something.

After the examination I would really have liked to have taken a long leave, but I was almost immediately appointed Secretary of Legation at Belgrade, where I was to act as *Chargé d'Affaires*

while the Minister was on leave I arrived there about midday, and my chief, Baron Wacker Gotter, a rather peevish old gentleman, was awaiting me at lunch, together with the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d Affaires, Marquis Pallavicini. The latter was the cleverest diplomat among our allies that I ever met in the course of a long career. We were together in St. Petersburg later on, and we were both at Constantinople during the collapse of 1918. Baron Wacker Gotter told me at once that he was going on leave that very same evening. I was to carry on quietly, and not send too many reports, as the Foreign Ministry did not like young Chargés d Affaires to put themselves forward. Anyhow, nothing was likely to happen, and in case of doubt I could always refer to Pallavicini. But as so often befalls when a prophecy is made, in our little world the event turns out quite otherwise. Scarcely had the Minister departed when a Cabinet crisis broke out, in the face of which I personally was practically helpless, as I did not know a single Serbian name. In my extremity I hurried round to Pallavicini who as good as dictated the first political report I ever made. This report gave rise to a lifelong friendship, and, for the matter of that, I was acting well within my instructions, for at that time Bismarck's directions still held good—that Serbia should be regarded as a domain of Austria Hungary, and Bulgaria of Russia. I particularly recall among the Belgrade papers a note addressed by Prince Bismarck to the German Minister in Belgrade, who had fallen out with his Austro-Hungarian colleague, to the effect that he must compose his difference with the latter at once. If he had any real ground of offence, he must report accordingly to Berlin, but on no account let anything be noticed in Belgrade.

During the two years which I spent in Belgrade, an old Fieldmarshal Lieutenant, called Freiherr von Thümmel, was Austro-Hungarian Minister. There could hardly have been a more unsuitable person for the post. He was typical of the spirit that provoked the War—overbearing in manner and irresolute

in act. He is alleged to have once said to the Serbian Premier: "I have served in Persia and in Montenegro, where the people are notoriously the biggest swindlers in the world, but in comparison with you they are honest men." He had indeed made not one single friend in Serbia, having undoubtedly taken the view from the outset that to make any was impossible.

During my time in Serbia I witnessed the regency of Ristitch, the *coup d'état* of King Alexander, and King Milan's abdication. Both were of the Obrenovitch House, as was the Minister Pasich, who remained for long a considerable figure in Belgrade politics. But for him, those years seem to belong to a past epoch, and they offer little interest to the historian, for, as the result of King Alexander's murder, no dynastic connection remains between past and present. Belgrade was then a village. My only really pleasant recollections are of travels in the country and through the Balkan peninsula. The Danube is lovely, and Nish and its neighbourhood, where I paid a farewell visit to the two kings, has a great deal of charm. My remarks bear no sort of relation to the present Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, with which I have never had the advantage of becoming acquainted. I was then glad to be able to observe the witches' cauldron of the Balkans from a second point of vantage.

My transfer to Dresden introduced me to quite different scenes, and, to my astonishment, brought me my first encounter with that mysterious and famous figure, Geheimrat Fritz von Holstein, about whom so much has been written, but with most effect by Prince Bulow in his *Memoirs*. I will therefore confine myself to my own experiences with Holstein, which even from my prentice years led me to regard him as an abnormal eccentric, one of those pathological cases of which there were too many in post-Bismarck Germany, and, alas, there are too many still. I made the usual calls at the Ministry, without any expectation of being received by such a "big noise" as Holstein, when he suddenly appeared unannounced in the corridor, and led me

into his room with the words: "I kept the Dresden post specially for you." Then followed a long talk, in which Holstein spoke of my parents, whom he had greatly respected, when he had served in London under my father. On that account he was sending me to Dresden, which had been my mother's native city. And he continued to treat me in this fashion in the years to come, while I was in favour with him. Holstein was accustomed to show his disfavour by not receiving the offender, which was always unpleasant, as to visit the Foreign Ministry and not see Holstein was like Rome without the Pope. One went back to one's post with a sense of having been snubbed, which is very bad for a diplomatist, as it may easily produce an inferiority complex.

Count Carl Dönhoff, the first husband of Princess Billow, was then (1894) Prussian Minister. I only knew him as an old man, and would not wish to be unfair to his youthful days. At that time he still presented an imposing appearance, but intellectually he was completely ossified, which did not matter, as the post was entirely superfluous. Bismarck maintained the Missions to the German Courts in order to please the various Sovereigns. They were really no more than appendages to the Courts, a sort of standard hung out to show that the individual States still existed. For the chief, these posts—with the exception of Munich—were almost an old age pension; for the Secretary of Legation, they were not without their advantages. He was back in Germany, which, however, he was enabled to view from a fresh angle, and he also saw a large number of despatches transmitted by the Foreign Ministry for the information of the various Governments.

The Dresden Court of those days was almost a pattern little Court, in the setting of that glorious city, notwithstanding the occasionally absurd stiffness of its etiquette and its strict Catholic atmosphere, quite out of place in that Protestant land. King Albert liked to see young people around him and he liked to see

them cheerful. On that account, he was very fond of his niece, the Archduchess Luisa, who later on fell into such misfortune as Crown Princess. She enjoyed immense popularity among the people, as she was bubbling over with good nature, joy of life and true humanity, but came more and more into conflict with the Court owing to her refusal to submit to its etiquette. My wife and I were on very friendly terms with the Princess, and we kept her friendship later on when those in high places tried to deprive us of it. We went to visit her at Ventnor in the Isle of Wight. In later years the Princess herself wanted to break off all her old connections, and so ended the friendship, which on our side still persisted. She was a woman more sinned against than sinning, more of a case for Sigmund Freud than for the historian.

Next in importance to the Court was the Theatre, which, under the direction of our friend Seebach, was admirable, and provided us with many delightful evenings. There were no politics at all in Dresden, and I felt myself raised to a higher sphere when at the end of 1895, again at Holstein's wish, I was transferred as Second Secretary to St. Petersburg, where, as a sacrifice to his friendship with Prince Radolin, our Ambassador there, I fell so deeply into his disfavour that I was never again able to look upon him as a friend.

The drama was played out as follows. When I reported at the Ministry in connection with my transfer, Holstein and Fritz Pourtalès—then Head of the Establishment Department—told me, in almost identical terms, that Radolin had quarrelled with the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, Duchess of Mecklenburg, which was highly regrettable, as she had hitherto been our main support at the Russian Court. My task in St. Petersburg would be to repair this mistake of Radolin's, and I had been specially chosen for the post on account of my family connections with Mecklenburg. I at once realised that this was going to be an unpleasant undertaking, and I decided to be perfectly candid

with Radolin, which I should not have done had I known him as well as I did later on. I had hitherto met him only casually in Berlin society. When I reported to him at St. Petersburg I gave him a faithful account of all this, and asked him if he too wished that I should lay my Mecklenburg mine. The Prince was very friendly, as he always was in my company, until we parted. He said he would be very glad if I would approach the Grand Duchess Vladimir, only I must be careful to report to him in due course all that I heard in her circle, until he could compose his differences with her. On this basis I thought myself secure and set to work accordingly. The drama was played out slowly during the two years I spent in St. Petersburg.

In the meantime something else happened which proved of the greatest importance to me. The Kaiser came to St. Petersburg to visit the Russian Court, and brought with him Prince von Böllow, then Ambassador, but shortly to become Secretary of State in the place of Marschall, I had never met Böllow before. As was the custom, the entire Embassy proceeded to Peterhof for the reception of the Kaiser. It so happened that Frau von Tschurschky gave birth to a daughter that very day, and her husband, the Counsellor of Embassy, had to make his excuses. After the reception, which Prince Böllow has described in his *Memoirs* a great deal better than I could do, I was in one of the saloons, still in uniform, awaiting events, when I was summoned to Herr von Böllow, and told that the matter was very urgent. I went to his room, where I found him striding up and down in a high state of excitement. As I entered the room he hurried up to me and said. 'Your chief knows nothing and cannot answer a single question, and Tschurschky is not available. Please be within reach so long as we are here.' Such was therefore the arrangement during the days at Peterhof. On the last evening there was a wonderful night reception, at which the famous Tscheschinskaya danced on a glass covered lake, and the usual distribution of decorations had already taken place. I alone had

gone empty away. Later in the evening, when the guests had already gone, Herr von Bulow came up to me and said: "I have been carrying your order about with me in my pocket, but I attached great importance to thanking you personally." Since that day Prince Bulow was always the kindest of chiefs, and after his resignation, a most valued old friend. Not that I ever allowed this to influence my views. As often as I had occasion, especially when I was Counsellor of Embassy in London, I frankly gave him my opinions, which were by no means always his. All men make mistakes, and Prince Bulow certainly did so, mainly as regards England, a country of which he had an inadequate knowledge. There is, however, an English phrase—"The proof of the pudding is in the eating." So long as Prince Bulow conducted our foreign policy we should not have involved ourselves in a world war, and I still hold the view that peace would have been maintained had he continued as Chancellor. Moreover, though many do not agree, and subject to reserve on matters of detail, I am of opinion that the *Memoirs* of Prince Bulow provide the best description, up to date, of the age of William II. There is no sense in abusing the book, for the age was as he depicts it and not otherwise. Why else should we have lost the war?

But though my first meeting with Prince Bulow was of more importance for my later life, my commission from Holstein was still the order of the day. Whatever could be done to carry out my task had been successfully achieved. So far as duty allowed, I played tennis every day with the Grand Duchess Vladimir, and on these occasions the Grand Duchess regularly appeared to dispense tea. We were on such good terms that my wife and I were invited to supper with the Grand Duchess on an average twice a week, which was not always pleasant, as these suppers took place, in accordance with Russian custom, at midnight. But it was not possible to effect a reconciliation between the Grand-Ducal pair and Radolin, because neither the Ambassador nor Princess Radolin would make a single move. Gossip was the

origin of the quarrel, and gossip kept it alive. The Radolins were always criticising the morals of the Grand Duchess's associates, and their comments were naturally passed on to her. After all, a diplomat is not sent abroad in the capacity of missionary, but to represent Germany's interests. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Franz Liechtenstein, whose morals also caused concern to the Princess Radolin, once said to me: 'These moral lectures leave me quite indifferent, I am accustomed to them from my relations, among them are many ladies like the Princess Radolin, equally pious and equally malicious.'

Meanwhile the "New Policy," subsequent to the denunciation of the Reinsurance Treaty, had made two further gross blunders. The Kruger telegram played almost the same part in German English relations as did the *Lusitania* later on in the relations between America and Germany—i.e., it was never forgotten, being regarded as an indication of the true state of feeling in Germany. I am very much surprised to learn that Monts, in a letter to Bülow, according to the latter's *Memoirs*, expressed approval of the Kruger telegram. The second blunder was the so-called Far Eastern Triple Alliance, which wedged Germany between France and Russia, in order to hold up a victorious Japan. Japan never forgave us this treaty, and it is always a blunder to stand out against the living forces of world history. Japan was the natural ally of Germany, as both countries were, in the phrase of to-day 'Nations cramped for room.' As a result, Japan stabbed us in the back during the world war. Moreover, it was 'Love's Labour's Lost' to attempt to separate Russia from France. We ought, instead, to have taken counter measures. But I had little to do with policy in St. Petersburg. This was dealt with by Tschurschky, with whom I was on terms of friendship until his death as Ambassador in Vienna. I merely represented him when he went on leave. He was kept pretty hard at work, as it was Radolin's habit to write a personal report immediately after every interview. This material had to be

edited by the Counsellor and discussed with the Ambassador every evening before despatch, so that there might be no possible confusion. Whatever may have been the Ambassador's faults, he was not secretive. He used to read to Tschirschky, or myself when I was taking his place, the letters that he received by courier from Holstein, with whom he was on familiar terms. These were always based on the false assumption that Russia and England would never come to terms, and that Germany must consequently hold the balance between the two Powers. Sometimes a letter went so far as to say straight out that Radolin's last report was valueless. He must write another, and then followed the entire contents of the desired report. Apart from such sidelights on policy, the main task of the Second Secretary was to write notes in French, in the composition of which Tschirschky, a man of extraordinary industry, was kind enough to give me his help. I well remember a twenty-page report on poultry disease which was our common effort.

Prince Bulow, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of the stiffness of the Russian Empress. On this point the following recollection may not be out of place: Princess Henry of Prussia, the Empress's sister, came to visit her at Tsarskoye-Selo, and the personnel of the Embassy had to be present to receive her. As Radolin was away, only Tschirschky and I drove with our wives to the little solitary railway station, which was exclusively reserved for the Court, and was still quite deserted. Shortly afterwards the Emperor and the Empress arrived without any suite, and we had hardly greeted Their Majesties when it was announced that the train would be an hour late. All six of us sat in the little waiting-room and tried to pass the time. I cannot remember ever having had such trouble over a conversation in my life. Every subject and every language were tried without much success, until the arrival of the Princess Heinrich at last brought us deliverance; unfortunately I was unaware of Grand Duke's Vladimir's device

on these occasions. He was once telling me how tedious the family meals were, owing to the difficulty of getting the Empress to talk. There was only one means of doing so, and that he often employed. He deliberately made a mistake in quoting from the *Almanach de Gotha* then the Empress would talk for an hour to put him right.

I owed the Grand Duchess Vladimir a very pleasant journey to Finland, when her brother, Duke Paul, was staying with her. The Emperor had put a small yacht at her disposal, and she suggested that I should take a trip with the Duke, who might otherwise be lonely. We sailed over Lake Ladoga, and stayed a few days at the Valaam Monastery, which now belongs to Finland and is in process of extinction. The landscape is indescribably beautiful, though rather melancholy and sombre, but our trip took place at the time of year when there is no night, which was some compensation. It was extremely interesting to see a self supporting Orthodox Monastery, where the monks themselves provided for all their own needs. From what I hear to-day I gather that Hitler and Schacht would like to reduce the German people to a similar level. On our departure from the Monastery, the Abbot gave me one of the usual Russian ikons depicting the patron saint of the Monastery. Since motor-cars came into being, this has hung in our car and hangs there still.

It was during my service in St. Petersburg that the coronation took place in Moscow. When I look back at the splendour of that ceremony, I cannot help remembering how few of the foreign guests, who so eagerly appeared, partly to pay homage to the Imperial pair, partly to be there, had the faintest foreboding that they were attending the last coronation in Russia. We of the Embassy, who were more familiar with the daily life of Russia, were less dazzled. I remember a luncheon with the well known American writer, Richard Harding Davis, who was wholly impressed, and said he felt he just witnessed, as he expressed it, 'the entry of the First Gentleman in Europe into Moscow.'

## YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP

He would not believe me when I told him that the phrase, "the colossus with the feet of clay," applied only too truly to the spectacle before us. The appalling accident on the Hodynka-Feld showed up the bad organisation of the ceremonial, and the fact that the whole Court attended the ball at the French Embassy the same evening as though nothing had happened also showed the Court's callousness towards the sufferings of the people. Moreover an incident at our own Embassy might be regarded as an omen. The Empress herself had desired that there should be a performance from Schiller's *Wallenstein* at the German festivities, for which Ludwig Barnay, Max Grube and Rosa Poppe had been specially summoned from Berlin. The Empress had herself chosen the first scene from *Wallenstein's Death*. At the rehearsal I was struck by the closing words: "Whether the issue shall be good or evil, the end alone shall show." This conclusion seemed to me unsuitable for a coronation, and I tried to induce Barnay to omit it, which he was quite willing to do, but the Empress declined to allow any omission; whether with a foreboding of the end, I cannot say.

The coronation month in Moscow was a very strenuous time for me. The entire Diplomatic Corps had to move there, and I went on ahead to get a suitable house for our Embassy and put it in order for our purposes. Moreover, it fell to me to organise the festivities that were to take place at the Embassy, the programme of which, in addition to the above-mentioned dramatic performance, was, by our own Emperor's order, to include a concert. At this, Carl Muck conducted the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra, and the first artists in Germany took part. I have never heard the overture and the quintet of the *Meistersinger* more magnificently rendered. Among the singers I recall the names of Ternina, Wedekind, and Gerhauser. I still think to-day with pleasure of all the laborious preparations needed to make the festivity a success. Barnay was the first artist to arrive, and I had his help in arranging a stage. When Muck appeared on the

following day everything had to be taken down and reconstructed, as he said he could not act on such a stage. However, in the end all was well. I remained on friendly terms with Muck, and I saw a great deal of him in America more especially, where indeed our friendship led to his internment—so, at least, he jokingly observed when we met for the first time after the war.

At supper at the Embassy there were eighty royal personages in one room, and I was much struck by the fact that only English was spoken—an unmistakable sign of the influence exercised by Queen Victoria on the history of the world. I remember hearing Prince Henry call out something to his brother in law, the Tsar, and addressing him as Nicky; and the Tsar replying in a friendly but determined undertone: "Don't call me Nicky in public." I will say no more of my experiences of a vanished world, and will merely mention the tactless speech of Prince Ludwig of Bavaria at the celebrations of the German colony in Moscow. The President of the German League had, with his usual innocence, spoken of "the Prince Henry of Prussia, surrounded by a suite of German Princes." Whereupon Prince Ludwig flushed with anger and broke in. "We're not vassals, we're allies!" *Tempi passati!* How many German princes would be glad to be vassals to-day!

I append a letter written after the ceremonies by Ludwig Barnay.

"Berlin, June 28th, 1896.

"DEAR COUNT,—

"As I was writing yesterday to His Highness the Prince, I could not help visualising all those days in Moscow once again and in so doing, I cannot fail to think with special gratitude of yourself, and all your forethought and energy, your consideration, and remarkable kindness in those hurried and strenuous days, you had time and eyes for everything, and it was largely due to you that the ceremonies in which I had the

honour to take part were so successful and went off so well.

"I can confess to you to-day that I was really astonished at the way in which you always succeeded in disposing of the thousand-and-one matters, large and small, that confronted you, in the correct and quickest way, and the one that caused least friction; you never showed the slightest sign of fatigue, or impatience in situations where the most composed and patient of men might have been tempted to lose interest.

"But I was more especially touched and grateful for the extraordinarily friendly and kind fashion in which you took charge of me at the review on the great day itself—never as long as I live will I forget that hour, nor cease to be grateful.

"Excuse my troubling you with these few lines, but—as I unfortunately had no opportunity of seeing or speaking to you when we left—I felt I positively must tell you how vividly you remain upon my mind, and beg you not quite to forget me.

"Please offer my respects to the Countess, and your colleagues at the Embassy, and keep a friendly recollection of

"Yours, with most obliged thanks,  
"LUDWIG BARNAY."

I could have maintained the tight-rope dance between the Grand Duchess and the Ambassador and his wife, and might even have succeeded in clearing up the quarrel had it not been for gossip and scandal. The Grand Duchess was, owing to the reserved habits of the Imperial pair, the most important personage at Court. For diplomats, she held the key to Russian society, which was not disposed to be very hospitable to foreigners. In this connection there is a pleasant anecdote, which is also perfectly true. In those days Countess Kleinmichel had the only really international salon in St. Petersburg. One evening at least two Ambassadors and Michael Radziwill, at that time still a German officer, were dining with her. The latter suddenly observed at the top of his voice: "*Est-ce que*

*c'est vrai qu'à Saint Petersbourg on ne reçoit pas les diplomates dans les maisons convenables?"* Upon which Countess Kleinmichel promptly retorted. *"Merci pour moi et pour mes invités"* But the friends of the Grand Duchess were admitted to intimacy in the most exclusive Russian houses. Everyone in diplomatic society consequently wanted to be in her good graces, and someone who had failed to get these ran round to the German Embassy, abused the Grand Duchess, and cast aspersions on myself. That meant the end, Radolin applied to the Foreign Ministry for my recall, without saying a word to me about it. Indeed, he was all good will and appreciation when I went on leave from St. Petersburg for the last time. It was not until I got back to Berlin that I discovered that he believed that I had conspired against him with the Grand Duke and Duchess, and I was never able to have the matter out with him. He was quite mistaken, but this mistake of his did me no further harm. I exchanged St. Petersburg and its appalling climate for the sunshine of Munich, a post selected for me by Holstein as a banishment from active official life. Indeed, I was utterly out of favour with him for a number of years.

I here append two extracts from letters from Tschirschky. It may be added that the daughter of the Grand Duke and Duchess became engaged to Prince Max of Baden, the subsequent Chancellor, but the engagement was later broken off.

*"Imperial German Embassy*  
" "

*St. Petersburg, 6.2.98*

*"I am merely surprised that you are surprised at your transfer. You must surely have realised that this would come about the moment you took a turn in a certain direction and parted company from the Others.*

*"The agitation has merely increased after your departure, and thus led to your letters remaining unanswered. Besides, you know how I dislike gossip—not another word!"*

"Good luck to you, my dear Bernstorff. Our best wishes to your wife.

"Sincerely yours,

"VON TSCHIRSCHKY."

"Imperial German Embassy

18.11.98.

" . . . . .

"On rereading my letter I notice that I have omitted the most important matter—the reconciliation with the Grand Dss. Our old Berlin Friend H. acted as *postillon d'amour*. A lunch was arranged at Tsarskoye! In view of the engagement with Max it was thought well to be on good terms with the Germanskoye posolstvo. And on the other side there is much satisfaction at remaining here. Thus do the most incredible things happen in the twinkling of an eye. . . .

"VON TSCHIRSCHKY."

I remained in Munich for five years, and there I never felt the lack of great affairs, owing to the confidential terms on which I lived with my chief, Count Monts, one of the best-informed men I have ever met. The routine of my duties never varied. I appeared at the Chancery about half-past ten every morning, to see whether the chief had written a report or whether anything else had turned up. Soon after eleven the Minister appeared from his private apartments with the words: "You have nothing to do, so let us go for a walk." Then followed a walk of about two hours, all over Munich, whatever the weather or the season of the year. And in the course of those walks we discussed all the highest subjects that can occupy the human intellect—politics, history, economics, art, literature, and philosophy. I have never learnt so much as I did on those walks, and from my subsequent reading as a result of them.

Between Monts and Bulow a posthumous war of Memoirs has broken out, which I greatly regret, as I have for both of them a

respect and regard that reaches beyond the grave. The dispute, moreover, seems to me unjustified, as it dates from a time when both men were distressed and embittered, and no longer in command of their best powers. When I served under Monts in Munich they were on the best of terms. In Prince Bülow's *Memoirs* there is continual evidence of a trait that is surprising in one who was so much a man of the world. He expected gratitude, and often judged men according to whether they met him on equally friendly terms after his fall. "I heard nothing from Count Monts after my resignation." And with this lapidary sentence his *Memoirs* dispose of Monts. Later letters from Prince and Princess Bülow, from which I append the following extracts, display the same attitude towards loyalty in friendship.

"December 18th, 1917

"

"We were very glad to have good news of you. We have followed with the greatest interest your patriotic, courageous and able work in Washington, we know how valuable it has been, and our best wishes go with you in your new task on the Bosphorus.

"MARIE BÜLOW'

"February 24th, 1918

"

"I do so wish I could see you and express my thanks in person. Your letter touched me very much, true friendship and true feeling are to me the highest things in life, and I do not think I have ever failed on that score.

"MARIE BÜLOW'

"April 15th, 1918.

'DEAR COUNT—

I cannot let our old friend of Rome days, Herr von Grancy, leave us without sending you a few words of thanks for all the

kind things you have written to us this winter. I was glad and touched to think that in this troublous and often distracted time you have preserved a true regard for my dear husband, which indeed he has always faithfully returned.

“ . . . . .

“MARIE BULOW.”

“Berlin. Hotel Eden. May 4th, 1919.

“MY DEAR COUNT,—

“Let me express my heartiest thanks for your kind birthday greetings, the beautiful flowers, and above all for the friendship that has now lasted for so many years. It is a bitter destiny to enter upon the age of the Psalmist while the fatherland is in such sore distress. But my faith in the future of our nation, a nation that has given to the world so much that is great and good and imperishable, is not to be shaken. And you are most emphatically one of those from whose work I hope for better days. My expectations and good wishes go with you on your way. It would be a great pleasure to my wife and myself if you would lunch with us one day *en famille* (about one o'clock).

“Name the day yourself. Would next Sunday suit you? *Alla buona*, of course, as the Italians say—a homely and a frugal meal.

“With renewed and grateful thanks,

“BULOW.”

I conclude from the above indications that what appears in Bulow's *Memoirs* about Monts was written in personal irritation. He would certainly have modified his judgment next day if the publisher had called his attention to the needless severity of his words.

As regards Monts, his *Memoirs* were only partly written by himself. The title “Recollections and Reflections” is an error of taste, as no man should compare himself with Bismarck. He, Frederick the Great, and Stein are after all the only Germans

who secured substantial political successes for Germany—politics being a sphere in which our country has been so unlucky. But we cannot all be geniuses, and the German people would have been grateful enough if Bismarck's work could have been maintained. Bülow achieved this, as long as he had the power. Tschirschky wrote to me under date 26.12.1901

"Luxembourg, 26.12.1901

"

"I much regret that Monts was not made Secretary of State, both for my own sake and in the public interest. I don't need to comment on the reasons for which the appointment did not take place. You know them as well as I do. I thank Heaven every day that the chalice of the Under Secretaryship passed me by! As things stand at present, it is a far from enviable post, quite apart from the fact that, owing to my eyes, I should not have been equal to office work.

"VON TSCHIRSCHEKY"

This refers to Monts' first cause of offence against Bülow. I am quite certain that the former expected to be appointed Secretary of State. He overcame his chagrin when Bülow appointed him Ambassador in Rome two years later. But Monts was counting on Vienna, and when Tschirschky received the post, his regard for Bülow was at an end. Monts possessed "the force of hatred," herein resembling the great Bismarck, and only his truly angelic wife understood how to mollify him by "the power of love." I share Tschirschky's opinion and would gladly have seen Monts in the position of Secretary of State. He was full of ideas, and his health was always better when he had a great deal to do. He then slept well and had fewer headaches. He was also more fitted to be head of the Foreign Ministry than Ambassador. In my experience his mordant wit was never turned against his subordinates, for I never had an unfriendly word from him.

during five years. But his wit was irrepressible when confronted with colleagues, or other "microcephalics"—his favourite phrase. On one occasion in Rome when he was playing bridge with the Serbian Minister, who was suspected of complicity in the murder of King Alexander, and had trumped Monts' king with his ace, the latter countered with the remark: "*Mon cher collègue, vous jouez comme un réicide.*" At a shooting dinner, in the presence of an assembly of Bavarian aristocrats, who were his chosen victims, he observed with a sly smile that the members of the Bavarian House of Lords notoriously "sprang from the dregs of the people." He also criticised the Upper Chamber with extreme freedom in his reports. On one occasion the old Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, is said to have shaken his head over one such report and observed: "But I myself am a member of that exalted body." On our long walks together every acquaintance was greeted with a sally of the same kind. As we passed on Monts used to say: "He enjoyed that, didn't he?" Monts always received my protests kindly, though he was never influenced by them for a moment; at most he would say occasionally: "Do you really think he took offence?" Munich is small, and people got used to Monts at last. Still, it is understandable that Bulow did not want such a difficult character either in Berlin or Vienna. In his own view, he was already kept busy enough with the "therapeutic treatment of the Kaiser," which he often described to me as his main activity.

When Monts' good fortunes began "to founder in the whirlpool of time," especially after his wife's death, he grew into so embittered a hermit that he practically became unapproachable. His cremation in Munich, which I attended as an old friend and as representative of the Government, was attended by hardly anyone except members of the family. From a large collection of letters from Monts that I still possess, I append one belonging to his most embittered time, which has, however, a place in my reminiscences as it deals with my first book. Old men all have their peculiarities, which they display in their memoirs and

letters. In Monts it was the desire to obliterate the fact that in his best days he was politically much inclined towards the Left. In Munich we were at one in the desire and the hope that the German Imperial system might be consolidated by a process of modernisation. The form of government known as "Democracy" then seemed very far away, and our attitude was one of "Liberalism." All such hopes have been engulfed by Dictatorship, which admits of no development. The best that we can hope for our poor fatherland is a Democratic Monarchy. For the sake of Austria and Bavaria a decentralised Pan German Republic would have been desirable. But for that, the Republicans needed were not available.

*'Haimhausen. 14.9.1920*

MY DEAR COUNT,—

You were so good as to send me your America book. And your handsome gift was accompanied by such a friendly message that I was deeply touched and our good old Munich days came back most vividly into my mind. These memories of better days and former glories will, if the abominable régime in Berlin goes on in this way, soon be our only remaining possession.

"Your book gives such an admirable description of the course of affairs in America during the war, and of your desperate struggle there, that I could hardly read it quickly enough. As you so rightly say we see here too the divided counsels that characterised the whole disastrous reign of William II. I, like you, believed in a western orientation of our policy; an acceptance of the English offer, or rather of the three offers from 1898 to 1902, and a completion of the Triple Alliance, would not indeed have saved us from war with France and Russia but the war would then have been a calculable event. A settlement with England would have been probable, but should not have occurred for forty or fifty years. All this has now been thrown away, the dream of Germany's greatness has vanished. You look for

salvation in democracy and in the League of Nations. I have no faith in either. I was never a Democrat; I was a Liberal, of the school of Theodor v. Bernhardi, whom we so often read together, and I believe that only a ruthless revision of that botched and idiotic Weimar performance can bring us salvation, if indeed that is still possible. The German people are not ripe for universal suffrage. How often did I urge Bulow that the constitution of the Reich should be adjusted towards the Right and that of Prussia towards the Left, but he light-heartedly gave way on the question of Deputies' allowances and of the Jesuits, to buy himself yet another brief respite. Here I cannot share your views, and I knew the man very well; but for his disastrous policy—for if Holstein provided the confused ideas, Bulow was the responsible statesman—we should never have been the victims of a general attack. B. ran after everyone and betrayed everyone. He had a disastrous fear of Russia, a besotted affection for Italy; these emotions were the foundations of his personal policy, into which Holstein and from time to time H.M. allowed themselves to be drawn. You call the withdrawal of Russia in the Bosnian affair a triumph for Bulow. I took an active part in affairs at the time, and my impression was a very different one. The fact that Aehrenthal could treat Bulow so cavalierly shows how little he thought of him. But once the deed had been done, and South-Slavism and Russia had been finally embroiled with Austria, the logical consequence should have been drawn and the challenge taken up. Russia was weak, and it is not at all certain that France would have resorted to arms. In any case the two Powers, with Italy, would have been the aggressors. And all three armies were quite unprepared for war.

"When Jagow went to Berlin I implored him to make overtures to England and to mistrust Italy. On the first point he did indeed make an honest effort, on the second he surrendered to illusions. As regards England, he came to grief over Krieger's legal quibbles, as you so neatly describe them in connection with

the Arbitration Treaty with the U.S.A. (Moreover the Ambassador was no use.) And finally Tirpitz and his ridiculous Pan Germans kept on queering the pitch of the Foreign Ministry. The whole business was even more pitifully *décousu* in Vienna. I tried to impress on Conrad that an outbreak of war must not be risked unless England remained neutral. It was also unfortunate that Tschirschky, himself an able and honest man, without support in Berlin and Vienna, and continually pestered by Dietrich Bethmann, should have been without authority against the war clique of the Ballhaus Platz, Hoyos, Forgach, etc. And then Jagow must needs get married and leave as his deputy that appalling personage Pili Kallener (Szogenyi having been dropped), with a dying wife at Heringdorf and quite out of touch with Vienna. Whether Bülow, as you assume, in the face of the will for war in both Paris and Petersburg, and the personal hatred of the Tsar and Tsarina for William II, could have avoided war, I take leave to doubt. As over Bosnia, he would have been even more inclined than Bethmann to submit to the leadership of Vienna. Moreover Bülow, as I discovered to my horror on a long walk with him in 1905 at Homburg, was an unconditional upholder of the invasion of Belgium. When I objected that England would then be certain to declare war, he retorted that we should recoup ourselves in France for our possible losses oversea. Those were his theories. He was extremely vague, and had one purpose and one only: 'How shall I keep in power, and how shall I throw dust in the eyes of H.M. and of the stupid Reichstag? H.M. could have been managed, but Bülow's flatteries destroyed the last remnants of practical sense in that incurable romantic. He always moved in higher realms, but in spite of all intrigues, and Bethmann's usual measures to keep him isolated, he was always accessible to reasonable representations in a private interview. One man could perhaps have spared us the objectionable part we played before the whole world in 1914 as the aggressor and the disturber

ace, if he had not been completely worn out and morally  
 of the ~~gr~~<sup>pt</sup>ated, and that was Eulenburg. He was politically a very  
 disinten~~gn~~<sup>gn</sup>on more than one occasion in smoothing matters down.  
 gifted ~~se~~<sup>se</sup>ognised, quite rightly, that after his apoplectic stroke  
 great ~~u~~<sup>u</sup>bld have to go. He urged him to resign in an interview  
 He also wld three hours. In the evening I dined with Bulow, and  
 Bulow ~~te~~<sup>en</sup> told me all about everything. A week later that  
 that lash~~on~~<sup>on</sup>tion on the beach at Ucker was reported by Harden.  
 Marie~~ca~~<sup>ca</sup>rpitz, and Bulow are, in my opinion, the chief culprits.  
 conver~~T~~<sup>T</sup>politically-minded nation would never have allowed  
 H.M., ~~ople~~<sup>ople</sup> to mismanage its affairs. Even Ludendorff, the  
 But a ~~re~~<sup>re</sup>-digger, would not have been possible if the nation and  
 these ~~h~~<sup>h</sup>stag had not been so stupid. I have before me the  
 final ~~gric~~<sup>gric</sup>of a Reichstag committee meeting at which Ludendorff  
 the Res~~es~~<sup>es</sup>out the unrestricted U-boat war, and in the name of all  
 minute~~ab~~<sup>ab</sup>Comrade Ebert expressed his thanks and his hearty  
 talked, ~~it.~~<sup>it.</sup> *Difficile est satiram non scribere.* And so France  
 parties~~re~~<sup>re</sup>destroy us, *à jamais*, and the politicaster Lloyd George  
 agree~~re~~<sup>re</sup> all along the line, just like Wilson-Don Quixote at  
 intends~~as~~<sup>as</sup>. But enough, and more than enough. Accept once  
 gives ~~ve~~<sup>ve</sup>warmest thanks, and give my regards to the Countess.  
 Versailly~~re~~<sup>re</sup>allowed to live through the coming year, we may also  
 more ~~re~~<sup>re</sup>buy some petrol, and in that case my first journey will  
 If we a ~~re~~<sup>re</sup>you.  
 be able~~re~~<sup>re</sup>  
 be to s~~re~~<sup>re</sup>

“*vale faveque*

“MONTs.”

Miss Monts had been, before her marriage to Monts, the  
 Eduard Haniel von Haimhausen, who had come to  
 Count from the Ruhr. Count Crailsheim, the Bavarian Premier  
 wife of ~~days~~<sup>days</sup>, pursued the policy of attracting rich men from  
 Bavaria to Bavaria so that they might become  
 of thosar after buying landed property, and thus be summoned  
 other ~~re~~<sup>re</sup>ennobl

to the Upper House. One of these was Eduard Haniel, who had bought the wonderful rococo castle of Haimhausen, twelve miles north of Munich, and completely restored it. Here the Haniels entertained a great deal, and among their constant guests were Monts, my wife and I. Soon after we had left Munich, Haniel died and later on Monts married his widow. This merely by way of explanation why Monts was living at Haimhausen.

Count Crailsheim was a stiff rather unapproachable gentleman, who knew how to preserve the dignity of Bavaria as the second largest Federal State. The softer sides of his character were his relations to his daughter, who kept house for him, and his taste for music. It was the latter that brought my wife and myself into close connection with the Crailsheim household, as we were all regular frequenters of Felix Weingartner's concerts. When Monts and I left Munich almost at the same time Crailsheim said to me that he regretted the departure of Count Monts, with whom he had finally established very friendly relations. Monts was always open and above board, one always knew where one was with him. In this connection I might mention that I once said to Monts, upon the receipt of some rather drastic instructions from Berlin, that it could not be very pleasant for him to convey such a message to Crailsheim, to which he replied with a laugh. On the contrary, it's just what I enjoy.

As I have mentioned Felix Weingartner, I may remark that Munich was in those days at its zenith as an artistic centre. Lenbach Kaulbach and Stuck were at the height of their achievement as painters, and lived in wonderful houses in which they entertained largely. The genial old Regent followed the tradition of the House of Wittelsbach in playing the part of Mæcenas, although he was no Ludwig II and never went to the Opera. I remember seeing him there on only one occasion in five years, when Victor Gluth's opera was first performed. Gluth was music teacher to the Princesses so the whole Court was present. In the interval the Regent told me he liked the opera as it

contained no Wagnerian discords. However, the old gentleman was much more friendly disposed to music than his successor. When the great actor and stage-manager Ernst von Possart was showing my wife and myself the new Prinzregententheater he had founded, he said in his Mephistophelian fashion: "When Ludwig III comes to the throne we will turn this place into a stud farm."

In those days we always went to Bayreuth whenever there were performances there. Frau Cosima was still at the height of her physical and intellectual powers, and herself managed the theatre. The intellectual *élite* of Germany and the world paid her almost royal homage. At that time she once came to Munich with her entire family to be present at the first performance of the *Bärenhäuter*, and we had supper with them after the opera at the house of Herr Friedrich Schons, a loyal Bayreuther. In spite of some natural defects old Bavaria was a delightful place from the artistic point of view. It fulfilled its æsthetic function in the Bismarckian Reich. I have been in favour of unification all my life long, and I still remain so in spite of the experiences of the present time, but a forcible achievement of that result seems to me a blunder. When in November, 1918, on the day after the outbreak of the revolution, which, in my view, is by no means yet at an end, I met Richard Strauss on the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin, he said to me with a deep sigh: "What will Germany do without Hoftheater?" Thus is the world conceived in the minds of artists!

There is one further episode of my Munich days that deserves mention. On June 16th, 1902 the Germanic Museum at Nuremberg celebrated its jubilee. Emperor and Regent met with the customary ceremonial. The marvellous city was thronged with historic memories, and the Emperor fancied himself as Burggrave. These very memories must have perturbed the Chancellor, for it was only very recently that the Emperor had gone off the rails oratorically under similar circumstances in

Marienburg, as is drastically described in the *Memoirs*. In any event, Bülow intended to prevent a repetition of such a catastrophe, and sent for me an hour before the banquet. He told me he was then going to the Emperor to prepare his speech with him. I was to wait until he returned, when he would give me the speech, which I was to telegraph to Berlin as soon as it had been delivered, so no other text could possibly be published. I have the draft among my papers, it is entirely written in Bülow's hand, the Kaiser paced up and down the room dictating it. At the banquet, while the Emperor was delivering his speech quite spontaneously, I kept the draft in my hand and read it. The fact that the Emperor delivered the speech with only the most trifling alterations is a proof of his phenomenal memory. If the technique of preparation of the Emperor's speeches had always functioned as well as this, much misfortune might have been avoided.

In November of the same year I was transferred to London as Counsellor of Embassy, where I served for four years under Metternich, the publication of whose remarkable reports have provided him with a memorial "*aere perennius*" in the sphere of high politics. These documents are the finest achievement of German pre war diplomacy, but their sole effect was the recall of their author. I came to London because Eckardstein, one of the most sinister figures in our pre war diplomacy, had been at last removed. I have to deal with him in greater detail, because his intrigues and his mendacity caused me much trouble and did his country much damage. It was only by an oversight and very occasionally that he spoke the truth. We were both of us sent out into the world on the same day, as attachés, by the Foreign Ministry: he to Washington and I to Constantinople. A year later we both returned to the Foreign Ministry from which however he was soon removed as utterly incompetent. To console him he was posted to London as an attaché, where, in the words of the old proverb, he had more

luck than sense. He was a very good-looking man, in a flamboyant sort of style, and he succeeded in marrying one of the richest heiresses in England, the daughter of Sir Blundell Maple, who happened to be a great friend of Joseph Chamberlain. Eckardstein had enough bucolic cunning to exploit all this good fortune. Our Ambassador, Hatzfeldt, was a very sick man, and Eckardstein had the chance of playing *postillon d'amour* between him and Chamberlain. As Prince Bulow told me in later years, it was then that the era of misunderstanding began. After the conclusion of a Colonial agreement, Hatzfeldt intimated to Berlin that Eckardstein should not be forgotten in the distribution of awards; what he had in mind was some trifling decoration. But Bulow thought that Hatzfeldt wanted Eckardstein as Counsellor of Embassy, and appointed him accordingly, as Hatzfeldt's well-deserved reputation was such that he could have pretty well all he asked for, to induce him to remain at his post. As a result of this, Eckardstein, as so often happens to little minds, got megalomania. In London he posed successfully as "the Kaiser's friend," and in Berlin as "the friend of King Edward," with very little justification in either case. Metternich said to me in later days, when we were both dining with Lichnowsky on one occasion in Berlin: "Eckardstein was the greatest political mountebank I have ever met in my life." Eckardstein was not intellectually equal to the work of Counsellor and betook himself to intrigue instead, in which he was politically more English than the English. The authorities in Berlin had not the courage to recall him because they thought his position in London much stronger than in fact it was. I don't know what ultimately led to Eckardstein's removal. But I am disposed to think a letter from Metternich to Bulow, printed in the *Memoirs*, states the view that resulted in Eckardstein's dismissal. In the course of this letter Metternich says: "The English Press was never so hostile to us as during the past year, when Eckardstein was still in charge of Press relations."

Prince Böllow was well known to be very sensitive to the Press, and Eckardstein had given the impression in Berlin that he, and he alone, could deal with the English Press. This was now shown to be untrue. However this may be, Eckardstein gave up his post, but stayed in London to continue his intrigues, and I, as his successor, had to clear the Augean stable of intrigues and neglected papers, in addition to which Lichnowsky, then Personal Counsellor, impressed upon me that I must keep on terms with Eckardstein owing to his position in London.

The task of carrying out my duties and keeping on terms with Eckardstein soon proved to be something like the squaring of the circle. He was very friendly to me at the start, and visited me more often at the Chancery than I found pleasant. It was not long before he made his real ambitions known to me: the relations between Germany and England were as bad as they could be, and he alone was in a position to change them for the better. For this purpose it was desirable that he should become Ambassador, and to attain that object he proposed that we should enter into alliance. I explained to him as politely as I could that I was Count Metternich's subordinate and could not act in any way against him. From that day Eckardstein became my bitterest enemy, and tried to influence Metternich to my disadvantage. Not that that caused me much misgiving, as the Ambassador was a *grand seigneur sans peur et sans reproche*, but as a diplomat he was rather passive, and possibly went a little beyond Talleyrand's maxim—*Surtout pas trop de zèle*. All this gave rise to a good deal of unpleasantness, which made my post in London a very difficult one. Eckardstein had hitherto been the active element in the Embassy but in his own fashion, by trying to usurp the control of higher policy which is always reserved for the chief, and by monopolising our dealings with the Press. The Chancellor chose me as Eckardstein's successor because he knew that in Munich I had always un-

obtrusively maintained good relations with the Press, as is indicated by the following letter of farewell from the Editor-in-Chief of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, dated November 1st, 1902.

"Dr. Martin Mohr,  
"Editor-in-Chief,  
"Allgemeine Zeitung."

"Munich, Nov. 1st, 1902.

"DEAR COUNT,—

"Upon the occasion of your transfer to London I feel I must write to offer you this further expression of my good wishes. It is not the egoism of the Director of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, who will sorely miss a kindly adviser in the hour of crisis; it is also the experience of a publicist, conscious of the duties of his profession and anxious that this professional responsibility shall be recognised where the co-operation of a responsible publicist ought to be duly valued—if I may so express myself; it is his experience, in short, that this important 'imponderable' of public life has at your hands met with the appreciation that might be expected from a statesman, and has always been most gratefully acknowledged.

"Confident as I am that so kindly and obliging an official will always find that a courteous confidence will always be repaid in like fashion, I am, with the best wishes for your prosperity, and the hope that your labours in London may be blessed to the benefit of our country, and may receive the recognition that they deserve.

"With the highest respect,  
"Your obliged and humble servant,  
"DR. MARTIN MOHR."

In the meantime the relations with the Press in London were much more difficult than they had been in Munich, and what

Bülow expected of me had to be carried out against the direct enmity of Eckardstein. He had a wonderful field of intrigue at his disposal. He told all his friends who had relations with the Press that he had been dismissed as being too English, while my dispositions were Pan German. In those happy days before the war diplomats hardly knew what was to be understood by the word propaganda. Among other horrors and abortions, the world war was responsible for the introduction of propaganda, which is to-day, alas, regarded as an important element in politics but is, on the other hand, despised as having been merely mendacious during the war. However, it was propaganda that was then expected of me in London, though very reluctantly approved by my chief, and directly countered by Eckardstein, in his role of Questenberg in the Camp. To-day, when I look back on a long political life, I am convinced that propaganda in itself is futile. It is just like advertisement in private business. If a firm supplies sound goods, advertisement produces excellent results, but if the goods are poor, the firm and its advertisement will soon break down together. Even so, the best political propaganda, equipped with wireless and every modern method, cannot transform a mistaken policy into a successful one.

So far as I was concerned with high policy during my period in London, my activities are already known, as my reports were printed in *Grosse Politik*. Some part of this has been touched on in my first book, as for instance the Venezuela incident. I may mention that Eckardstein was also responsible for the mismanagement of this question, as Charge d'Affaires he accepted the first English suggestion, instead of rejecting it a *lumine*. He had been in America, and could perfectly well have imagined the course that events would take. However, in this book I propose only to deal with matters that were not discussed in my first book, and only those in which I was personally concerned.

This was the epoch of Edward VII, about whom so much has

been written that his personality is pretty generally known. However it may be regarded, the King certainly did not desire the world war. Whether he could have prevented it had he been living in 1914 is again another question. Perhaps he could have done so by exercising his authority on Sir Edward Grey, who had not, in 1914, the position he afterwards acquired. I hardly knew the later Lord Grey of Fallodon, as I was transferred to Egypt soon after the Liberal victory at the elections, so I will not venture to offer any opinion on him. In any case, in 1914 he missed the opportunity of maintaining peace and introducing an epoch of peaceful economic development. Why were all opportunities missed since the beginning of the century? Was it an inevitable fate? In my opinion—no; the trouble was that there were no great men anywhere. The available statesmen had no more than a vision of what might have been, like Wilson, and he, too, failed when he tried to realise it.

Edward VII was pre-eminently a winning personality. I particularly remember a little incident which throws a flash of light on his art of handling people. We had a certain Count Rhena as attaché at the Embassy, the young morganatic son of a Baden Prince, and thus related to the House of Coburg. A Princess of one of these Houses had written to the King asking him to receive the young man. I was then Chargé d'Affaires, and after the next great reception at Buckingham Palace the King sent to me to say that he would like to see young Rhena. His Majesty received us in a private room, and spoke German throughout. After the usual words of greeting, the King turned to Rhena and said: "And now let us talk about *our* aunt." By this *Gleichschaltung*, to use the jargon of to-day, Rhena's morganatic heart was won for ever. Unfortunately this very promising youth died young as the result of an accident.

But to return to Eckardstein, who was my main anxiety during my service in London, the conviction gradually gained ground in Berlin that he was a political fraud. Holstein, who received me

once more, and began by degrees to forgive me for having parted on bad terms with his friend Radolin, once told me outright that he had discovered that Eckardstein's reports were directly contrary to the truth. However, Eckardstein went on working against me in London.

I have said what I think of propaganda, which certainly could not have prevented the war. Even the agreements regarding the Colonies and the Baghdad Railway, which were to save the situation before the door was closed, were of no avail. Only a naval agreement could have prevented the world war. None the less, I am of the view that Eckardstein's activities did harm, although they did not alter the historical result. I may here record that in later years, when Marschall died, there was, quite unknown to me, a question of my return to London as Ambassador. I was once sitting in the Foreign Ministry in the room of my friend Mirbach, with whom I had worked in London, and who was murdered later in Moscow. He urged me to press for a transfer from Washington to London. I firmly refused, I said I was very happy in Washington, and that, besides, I should certainly be dropped on the occasion of the next Naval Bill, if it was the intention to transfer me to London. I was then very glad that Lichnowsky was sent to London, as his position in Berlin, which was much stronger than mine, would enable him to reach a naval agreement with England. I may here add a detail or two about Eckardstein, which belong to a later period. I left London in the pleasant hope of never seeing him again. But he turned up in America, where he was trying to sell his Memoirs. When this came to my ears, I wrote a private letter to Wilhelm Stumm, who was then in charge of the American Department at the Foreign Ministry, warning him of the scandal that might be expected from such a publication. Then came the world war, and Eckardstein was interned, an unwise proceeding that provided him with a martyr's crown, which he thoroughly exploited after the revolution. He once appeared in the Foreign

Ministry, accompanied by armed Spartacists, to arrest Stumm and myself, whom he regarded as responsible for his own imprisonment. I was able to telephone to Scheidemann in time, and Eckardstein was ejected from the Ministry by superior forces.

I here append a few letters of my London period, some from journalists, who were at that time very well known, and some from Geheimrat Hammann, who was Bulow's right hand in all Press matters, and was also the author of several books. It appears from Hammann's letters and from those of his colleague Esteraux, how bitterly Eckardstein intrigued against me, and also what deep interest was taken by Bulow in my activities in London. There are a few letters from Valentine Chirol, a constant contributor to *The Times*, with whom I was on very good terms in London, but who later on honoured me with his hostility, as will appear from the incident at Aberystwith which I shall mention in the proper place. But even then he was suspicious, as he had been *Times* correspondent in Berlin, where he had fallen out with Holstein.

There will also be found some letters from Victor Eulenburg, the ablest of my colleagues in London at that time, who unfortunately died young; from Karl Puckler, who preceded Eckardstein as Counsellor in London; and from the English Counsellor of Embassy in Washington, Mitchell-Innes. I have given extracts from these letters because they seem to me specially characteristic of that time, when it was still hoped that the Anglo-German fleet problem might be solved in peaceful fashion.

From my journalist friends I include a few letters from Lucien Wolf, whom Eckardstein made particular effort to get at through his intrigues.

Sidney Whitman was a friend of Bulow, and at his wish and at my suggestion, he came to Berlin as a representative of the *New York Herald*. From this collection of letters it may be seen that Anglo-German relations were already very strained during my service in London. From the mass of letters which

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I still possess from those days, I have chosen only a few, which are typical as indicating conditions in London and my direct and lively intercourse with the Chancellor

"Kensington, W 4.I '05

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"

"Yes, I think that is Delbrück's weak point: he does not possess tact enough for his responsible position. On the other hand he is no Streber, although a couple of years back S.M. got 'round him,' I think, with a little flattery. His remarks about England and the United States are based on complete ignorance of public opinion in England. He little knows that all the King's horses and all the King's men would never get England to tackle the U.S. again!

"I fancy you asked me who 'Calchas of the *Fortnightly* is? I asked one of the directors of Chapman and Hall this morning, an old friend of mine. He said he was bound to secrecy; but he did not mind telling me that he is an English journalist and not even one of distinction—in fact, one whose name would be quite unknown to me. I thought you might like to know this.

"

"With kindest regards,

"Yours very truly,

"SIDNEY WHITMAN

"Kensington, W 13.X '05

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I have not yet heard from Bennett, but even if he is in Paris, which is doubtful, there has hardly been enough time. There are two points to be considered in dealing with him. (a) He is very vain in a big way, and (b) at the same time extremely suspicious of having his vanity detected and being pandered to.

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"In a general way he does not attach much importance to his correspondents being kindly received and supplied with everyday political news: particularly not for the Paris edition.

"He is afraid of such favours being paid for at the price of his independence. It is only when there is *really* something *journalistically big* in the view that he is to be got at by supplying him in good time with the right scent: the first information of what is likely to take place. Thus you might put it to Prince Bulow that when *he thinks anything of importance 'ist im Anzuge'* —then is the time to give Gordon Bennett the hint to send somebody special to Berlin, so that he can steal a march on his competitors in New York. That is how I arranged matters with the Sultan for him at the time of the Armenian massacres in 1896.

"If once a *coup* succeeds—it need not be massacres—Bennett is a man who will not forget it. For with him journalistic prestige is everything and anybody who has assisted him in the making of it may rely upon him—at least for a time—through thick and thin. For instance, should English newspapers continue their campaign of insane provocation towards Germany you may rely on his continuing his decided deprecatory attitude. *Il voit de loin* and has already discounted what he believes Roosevelt and Elihu Root are thinking in this matter! For it is *they* who in the last resort will call a 'halt' in this iniquitous game!

"Yours sincerely,

"SIDNEY WHITMAN."

"Berlin, 10th 11. '06.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

".....

"I have read some paragraphs in the English and German papers which seem to indicate a better feeling between England and Germany. *Es wäre ja zu wünschen*, and I am sure you have

done and are doing valuable work towards bringing such a result about. I only hope you will not be handicapped by any more unfortunate ebullitions of oratory in high place. I consider it a dreadful thing for Germany—that the Emperor seems to have become what they call *das Karnickel* for the Press of the world.

*"Er hat es aber so haben wollen.* To-day he is reported to have said this and to-morrow that, all of which has to be semi officially denied. And this goes on all the year round at the expense of the dignity of a great nation.

"Bennett asked me by telegraph to come back here, as he expected complications to take place over Morocco. But I fancy he is mistaken. I shall see Prince Bülow this evening and probably get to know something about the situation. I fancy he is very well satisfied with the man who now represents the *New York Herald* here and whom I have done my best to conform in this position. He is a steady going, cautious, inoffensive English man who has lived the best part of his life in Germany and is entirely without the imperialist virus in the blood.

'As I think I already told you in a previous letter, I have only one wish, that is to be back with my wife and children out of the newspaper business *pour de bon*. '*Wie da gelogen wird, das ist schon nicht mehr schön, geschweige andändig*' When I was in Moscow I saw a number of *The Times* containing a description of the riots there in which it was stated in a leading article that the killed and wounded numbered 15-20,000. I could scarcely believe my eyes. The real number were, I should say, about 1,500! The Jews of Europe have evidently made a dead set at Russia, which however is not surprising considering circumstances.

'P.S. I know Campbell Bannerman personally and am sure he has very friendly feelings towards Germany. If he has any sentiments of a different nature they are, or rather were, only

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entertained towards the German Emperor: this I know to be the case.

“Yours sincerely,

“SIDNEY WHITMAN.”

“Berlin, 22.11.1906.

“DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

“ . . . . .

“Since meeting you it occurred to me that you might like to know that I have had a talk with two of the leading correspondents here. They tell me that although in some ways they receive greater kindness and consideration here than in London, Paris or Vienna, in others they are being continually thwarted in their work by *Hofschränzen* and police officials. I suggested they should draw up a list of the items they have in their mind and submit them for the consideration of the Wilhelmstrasse.—

“I may tell you that the foreign correspondents here are very displeased with the sensationalism of the *Daily Mail* which discredits them as a body. I fancy the evil will in the long run work its own cure.

“I am leaving to-night for London.

“ . . . . .

“The *Daily Mail* man here is an American of the name of Wile. He was quite harmless before he had taken Harmsworth's 'shilling'—!

“Yours very sincerely,

“SIDNEY WHITMAN.”

“Berlin, 20.11.1906.

“DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

“ . . . . .

“I dined with Prince Bulow the night before last and told him of the nice way you had written to me about him. He seems very optimistic.

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"Dr Hammann is the great man here behind the scenes now. They tell me he has displayed extraordinary ability in organising the election campaign. They have just made him a *wirklicher Geheimrat* but he has very much overworked himself. I met Holstein the other day in the street. He is now *frère et cochon* with M Harden. He is very angry with me still for what I wrote about him in the *New York Herald* last year. I only write you these details thinking they may amuse you, for I am not any longer interested in these matters, which to me now represent *eine brotlose Kunst*. When I get back to London I think I shall devote myself to writing my 'reminiscences' of Turkey, which country I have visited several times and about which I fancy I have gathered some interesting data.

"Yours very sincerely,

"SIDNEY WHITMAN

"April 5th, 1905

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I see that the German Press takes in very ill part the attitude I have felt it my duty to adopt towards the new orientation of German policy in Morocco, and the *Kölnische Zeitung* even suggested that the *Daily Graphic* is 'accessible to all kinds of influences. I think it only right to assure you—although I trust it is unnecessary—that the view I take is my own view, and owes nothing to any outside influence. I regret very much that it is impossible for me to take any other view, especially when I call to mind the conversations I have had with you on the Morocco question. In the light of those conversations, I strongly defended the Emperor when the French and English Press first began to carp at his proposed visit to Tangier, and I pointed out, what I fully believe, and what I think I have a right to believe that that visit should not be construed as an act of hostility to the Anglo-French Agreement. When however, I discovered to my

great astonishment, that I was wrong, I had no alternative but to express as strongly as I could my humble disapproval of the visit. I regret the action of your Government, not only because I hold it to be superfluous, but because it must arrest all efforts towards an Anglo-German reconciliation, and because it seems to me calculated to justify the reproach that German foreign policy is essentially lacking in straightforwardness. It is perfectly true that I am far from being enamoured of the Anglo-French Agreement, and that I should have preferred an *entente* with Germany to one with France, but the powers that be have thought otherwise, and it would be a fatal thing for any Englishman to try to undo their work under present circumstances. Moreover, the time for Germany's objections was twelve months ago, and not only did she not raise them, but she certainly led us to believe, by the Emperor's statement to the King of Spain at Vigo and by Count von Bulow's speech in the Reichstag, that she had no objections to offer.

"I have thought that in view of our friendly relations I ought to make clear to you my motive in this unfortunate business.

" . . . . .

"Yours very sincerely,  
"LUCIEN WOLF."

"April 7th, 1905.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I was out all day yesterday and only found your letter when I returned home late. I shall be delighted to come and talk the matter over with you, but my point is, that whatever France may have done, as it was, ostensibly at least, in virtue of an agreement with us, your Government should have made some friendly communication to us before taking public action. I think those of us who have always assumed that Anglo-German relations were really friendly had a right to expect this. As it is, you drive us, whether we like it or not, to back up France to the

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end. However, I am glad to know that our own personal relations will not be affected by this unpleasant incident.

'Very sincerely yours,

"LUCIEN WOLF"

"March 1st, 1906.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I congratulate you most heartily on your appointment to Egypt, so far as it implies advancement for yourself, but I confess that I feel that I deserve some condolences in regard to it, for I am unaffectedly sorry that London—and with London myself—is to lose you. However, I wish you every success in your new departure, and I trust that when your next promotion becomes due you will leave behind you in Cairo as excellent a record in every way as poor Richthofen did.

'Let me know when you are leaving, so that I may have an opportunity of offering you my *aux revoirs* in person.

"Yours very sincerely,

"LUCIEN WOLF"

"April 12th, 1906.

DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

'When are you leaving for Egypt? And will you kindly let me know who is to be your successor in London? If he would care to know me, I need scarcely say that with my experience of you I shall be delighted.

'By the bye, I saw in the *Kölnische Zeitung* the other day a long notice of an article of mine in the *Westminster Gazette*, the introduction to which is to my mind almost libellous. If you have any influence with the writer I shall be glad if you will point out to him that there is no ground whatever for believing that I am employed by anybody to represent views which are not my own. I do not wonder that Germany has a bad Press in this country, when people who, like myself, are disposed to be quite fair are

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made the object of wicked and unfounded insinuations by German correspondents in London. No one, I am sure, knows better than yourself how little amenable I am to influences which do not appeal to me conscientiously. I am sorry to worry you with this unpleasant business.

“Yours very sincerely,

“LUCIEN WOLF.”

“DEAR COUNT,—

“I hasten to inform you by the bag that is due to leave to-day that I have put your letter of Dec. 15th before the Chancellor. He wishes you to arrange, if possible, for the Posadowsky article to be turned to account. Perhaps part of it at least could be used? Or has Lucien Wolf produced anything already? If so, please let me have it, so that I may keep Count Posadowsky quiet. Against the passage in your letter stating that any improvement in Anglo-German relations must proceed from the London Press, the Chancellor has noted ‘Yes.’ He is most anxious that you should continue your efforts to keep on good terms with it.

“Yours, etc.,

“HAMMANN.”

“Berlin, 16.1.04.

“DEAR COUNT,—

“The fuss began with the report attributed to Munich in the *Neue Freie Presse* of the 17th inst. The suggestion was that the anti-ambassadorial conspiracy originated in Silesia. Far from it; the report came from London and was primarily directed against you. On that account it was promptly taken up by the *Figaro*.

“Even before Feb. 17th, Count Sizzo Noris, brother of the present acting Austro-Hungarian Consul-General in London, who had lately arrived from that city, had intimated that a little diplomatic scandal was imminent; strange things were being

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said in the London clubs about Count Bernstorff's relations with the Press. He aspired to be Ambassador in London. Important changes were impending, etc., etc., as stated in the Munich report in the *N Fr Pr*

"I have to-day heard another report from quite a different quarter, ascribed to a reliable and wholly disinterested authority, to the effect that Count Bernstorff had for some time been watched by two detectives, the object being to discover your relations with the Agence Latine; the coincidence of a meeting between yourself and a representative of the said Agency, immediately followed by the publication of Anglophobe matter by the Agency, would provide material for attacks against you. In this connection the authority—who is personally unknown to me—made vague references to your relations with Lucien Wolf, with the suggestion that the latter abused your confidence.

'I tell you all this so that you may be the more on your guard. At the same time, the Chancellor desires you to know that he has complete confidence in you, and hopes you are keeping your nerve!

On Nov 28th, 1904 Pieper reported confidentially to the Director of the Wolff Telegraph Bureau that Eckardstein had told him at the Marlborough Club of an impending scandal—Lucien Wolf, Count Bernstorff, anti Russian and anti French articles—and said that as soon as direct proofs were obtained the matter would be brought to a head. I remembered all this when I was told the story of the two detectives to-day. The story emanates, so the authority maintains, from true blue English circles which are much excited by the suspicion that the Embassy is working to prevent good relations between England and Russia.

'The Agence Latine in Paris, founded by the Pan Slav and Russian Colonel, unattached Tscherug Spiridovitch, was responsible as you will remember, for circulating the statement by means of posters that the Russian revolutionary movement

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was backed by English and Japanese money.

"I hope I shall soon hear that these intrigues against you have been brought to nothing.

"Yours, etc.,

"HAMMANN."

"Berlin, Oct. 23rd, 1905.

"DEAR COUNT,—

" . . . . .

"Sidney Whitman's letters have been submitted to the Chancellor. Prince Bulow is very pleased with your hitherto successful efforts to get at Gordon Bennett through Whitman, and hopes for further results to come. He has noted it 'Very important.' The next step should be some sort of journalistic *coup* for G.B. We will think it over here. Perhaps you could let us have any suggestion that occurs to you.

"ESTERNAUX."

"June 17th, 1904.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

" . . . . .

"I am very much obliged for your two letters and for the assistance you have given Mr. Saunders by telegraphing to Berlin. At the same time as it appears from a communication received by Mr. Saunders from the Hamburg-Amerika S.S. Co., that a certain number of berths have been reserved already on board one of their ships for members of the foreign Press on a list prepared in the Wilhelmstrasse, it seems to me rather strange that it should have required your friendly intervention—which was, after all, an accident we could of course in no way count upon—to secure the inclusion of the representative of *The Times* on that list. It is not the habit of *The Times* to ask for any privileged treatment, but we think we have the right to expect the same treatment as may be accorded to any other British

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newspaper, and to expect it without any solicitation on our part or on our behalf. It looks as if the Wilhelmstrasse did not quite share your views of the Christian virtues, or at least prefers to leave them to be practised by the other party

"Yours sincerely,

"VALENTINE CHIROL."

"Westminster, S W, Oct. 17th, 1904.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

'I am so sorry I am already engaged for next Wednesday and must therefore deny myself the pleasure of accepting your kind invitation

"I should be so glad if you would come and lunch here one day next week—at your choice—so as to have a quiet talk about Anglo-German relations, upon which I hope we may agree to differ amicably! I say 'next week' because this week I am full up with country cousins who are coming up for a wedding to-morrow. Though I quite understand the advantages from the German point of view of utilising the war for a *rapprochement* with Russia—and therefore cannot see why Berlin should be so keen to deny it—it seems to me to be carrying it to dangerous lengths to try and interfere in regard to Tibet, where it cannot be pretended that Germany has any *locus standi* however, I suppose the Wilhelmstrasse knows best!

"Yours very sincerely,

"VALENTINE CHIROL."

"Westminster, S W, Oct 21st, 1904.

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

'I shall count upon your inviting yourself whenever you feel disposed to come to lunch here just leaving me for your own convenience, time to reply in case I should be employed

## YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP

"Naturally, I cannot agree with you that our Peking correspondent has sent us a *canard*; it is not his habit. Moreover, it is not the only quarter from which the intimation has reached us. I do not in the least resent the policy of hostility towards this country which the German Government has pursued now for nearly ten years. Every nation is the best judge of its own interests, and from the German point of view I should very probably be disposed to approve that policy, just as I should have approved the anti-Austrian policy of Bismarck before 1866 and his anti-French policy before 1870. But I cannot make myself a party to the endeavours of Berlin—intelligible as they are from the Berlin point of view—to disguise the dominant tendency of Germany's present policy. Curiously enough, your quotation from Lessing is the very one I recollect using one day in the autumn of 1895 to Baron Holstein, when he had summed up, as usual, to me the whole catalogue of England's sins against Germany and foreshadowed the development of German policy into which he held that we were driving Germany—and which we have witnessed since then fulfilled to the letter!"

"Yours very sincerely,

"VALENTINE CHIROL."

"Westminster, S.W., Feb. 14th, 1912.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I am afraid you must think me very remiss in not thanking you for your very kind letter of congratulations of Jan. 1st. But I was just going abroad when it reached me, and during my journey in Russia, the boundless hospitality of our Russian hosts left me not a moment's leisure. The extraordinary cordiality with which we were welcomed by all classes from the Emperor and Empress downwards goes at any rate to show that the most acute political antagonisms are nowadays capable of adjustment, and when adjusted, leave little or no rancour behind them. Perhaps we may see another illustration of this before long in another quarter!"

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

"You may perhaps have heard that I have retired now from my active connection with *The Times*. I shall be sixty this year and shall have completed twenty years very strenuous work for the paper, so I thought I was fairly entitled to aspire to a position of more freedom and less responsibility. Moreover, India has gripped me more and more of recent years, and I hope to devote a good deal of my newly acquired leisure to the important problems with which the awakening of Asia confronts us there.

"I need hardly say that if at any time you break your journeys in London and have a few moments to spare I shall only be too delighted to welcome you again to my little home.

"Yours very sincerely,

"VALENTINE CHIROL."

Feb 27

'MY DEAR COUNT,—

I am delighted to see that the German Canadian tariff quarrel has been settled.

"Both countries are to be heartily congratulated on this good sense and I trust the agreement may be the precursor of a better understanding all round.

"I believe that one of the great difficulties is that your government does not understand the tremendous force of pure sentiment, apart from any political consideration, that runs through our people, especially as regards the Navy. It has been our idol ever since Queen Elizabeth's time and you do not realise how deep an irritation has been caused by your roughly shaking the pedestal on which it stands.

"Yours very sincerely,

"A. MITCHELL INNES."

YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP

"Imperial German Legation,

"Luxembourg.

"30.II.'04.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

" . . . . .

"Our Chancellor is now making efforts to dispel the spectre of discord between Germany and England. But greater efforts still will be needed. And the first essential is *confidence* between the leading men. That is certainly not easily achieved. For Balfour wobbles, Chamberlain has taken a dislike to us, and Rosebery—? But if *written guarantees* (which of course must be mutual) should be desirable, Bismarck would, I believe, not have hesitated to give them, and I hope that his pupil may take the same view. And if you use your influential position in this sense, you will deserve well of history.

" . . . . .

"Yours, etc.,

"C. PUCKLER."

"Berlin, W.

"U. d. Linden 36.

"Aug. 14th, 1904.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

" . . . . .

"The Chancellor and Holstein had a long conversation with me yesterday regarding the state of affairs in London. On the main questions and what I conceive should be the answers to them, I am also writing to the Ambassador.—The feeling here, and especially that of His Majesty, is extremely excited, as naval information seems to suggest that that article in the *Navy and Army Gazette* represents the official attitude, and that England really proposes to fall upon us in the near future, next year if possible, and destroy our fleet. The General Staffs of the Navy and Army have accordingly held a Council of War to discuss

what should be done in such a case, which is all to the good, as it is obviously necessary to be prepared for a contingency of the kind. I expressed the view that England would not at the moment systematically prepare for war against us, that England was, in fact, war weary, and would on financial grounds avoid war against any power within the next few years. But that England under existing difficulties would be more disposed to move against us than against Russia (cf Dogger Bank) In England it was generally believed that we should be the aggressors. From all that I have heard—I am disposed to think that an attempt will be made to reach an understanding with Russia, I was, for example, asked by the Chancellor and Holstein whether I thought that a *rapprochement* towards Russia would increase anti German feeling, as was maintained. I replied that I thought this was possible, but need scarcely be taken into consideration, as that feeling would, if that were possible, grow more exasperated by every new ship and every step forward in our economic life. In any case, England would be more inclined to take a high hand with an isolated Germany than if she were in any sort of accord with Russia, as this would give Germany an opening at a notoriously tender point—the Indian frontier

"Yours, etc.,

"VICTOR v EULENBURG.

This period of service in London came to an end with my appointment as Consul General in Cairo. There were some technical difficulties about the transfer, as will be seen from the appended letters from the Chancellor, Paul von Bülow, Personal Counsellor, and Secretary of State von Tschirschky. The point was that the Kaiser did not want me to leave London until the Algeciras Conference was over

YEARS OF APPRENTICESHIP

"Chancellor.

"Strictly confidential.

Berlin, Feb. 5th, 1906.

"MY DEAR BERNSTORFF,—

"It gives me pleasure to inform you that His Majesty the Emperor and King has acceded to my proposal that, in recognition of your services in London, you should be considered for the post of Consul-General in Egypt, in succession to Freiherr von Jenisch.

"I am sure that you will justify the confidence in you that is indicated by your selection for such an important post, and I would add that this communication is addressed to you personally and is not to be made public for the present.

"Yours, etc.,

"BULOW."

"Confidential.

Berlin, 11.2.'06.

"DEAR BERNSTORFF,—

"I should like to tell you at once, in a very few words, how the matter stands *at present*. The transfer cannot be completed before April—possibly not until May. But secrecy need no longer be maintained as soon as the Bundesrat has consented to your appointment, and the usual announcement has been published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. That will take place in a fortnight or at most three weeks. But if you must make it known before that, I would do it in a form that does not attract too much attention—or would you like me to telegraph to you when secrecy is no longer needed?

"I congratulate you heartily on your distinguished promotion and appointment, which, by the way, you owe directly to the Chancellor.

"In haste—with respectful regards to the Countess,

"Yours, etc.,

"P. BULOW."

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

"Foreign Ministry

Berlin, Feb 22nd, 1906.

'Confidential.

"DEAR BERNSTORFF,—

"For your own convenience I may inform you quite confidentially that His Majesty the Emperor and King, when the memorandum of your appointment as Consul General for Egypt was submitted for ratification by the All Highest, deigned to make a marginal note to the effect that he attached importance to your remaining in London for the present. The Chancellor, too, does not consider a change of Counsellors desirable during the Morocco Conference, but intends, as soon as the Conference is at an end, to effect your transfer to Cairo at once, a course which has already received the All Highest approval.

"Yours, etc.,

"VON TSCHIRSKY'

When the transfer was complete, I received a command to report to the Kaiser at Utville on my way to Cairo. I was then in high favour with His Majesty, as my reports from London had pleased the Sovereign. Moreover, the Kaiser had already begun to dislike Metternich, and greeted me with the words 'It is a pity you are leaving London. While you were there we did at least get some news.' Then His Majesty took me round the Castle himself. H.M. stopped in front of a sofa and said, 'Metternich went to sleep here one evening, and fell with his head on the Empress's lap while I was reading aloud.'

Cairo was one of the pleasantest posts I have ever had. The climate is ideal in winter, and in summer it was open to the chief to take a long holiday. I used to spend the latter part of the summer at San Stefano by the sea. In a word, I can hardly think of anything more pleasant, especially after the fogs of London, and the Chancery with its untiring labours."

There was little of political importance in my work at Cairo.

There is always blue sky in Cairo, and the colours of the sunset are such as have to be seen to be believed.

So far as policy came into view at all, it resolved itself into an attempt to allay the English suspicion of Germany. Those were the days of warm and growing friendship between Germany and Turkey, and the alleged position of the Kaiser as protector of Islam stood in the foreground of international political interest. On that account we were regarded by the English with decided suspicion, from which Lord Cromer was not free. When I paid my farewell visit to the Foreign Office, Sir Eric Barrington said to me slyly: "I hope you will like Lord Cromer; he is a real Baring, even a little over-Baring." I never had any complaints to make of Lord Cromer, whom I regarded as one of the most outstanding men with whom I have ever been brought into close contact, a true Empire-builder. When he had to retire, he opened his heart to me on one occasion: This land of Egypt, he said, owed him everything, and at the first opportunity they took sides against him with the Turks, who had brought nothing but disaster on the country. His successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, whom I had already known well at the Foreign Office, had been instructed to win over the Arabs by concessions. He talked in very different fashion. I particularly remember a conversation we had while out for a long walk together. We were talking of Anglo-German relations and Sir Eldon said to me: "Look here, we really ought to be able to get on with each other. We rule this country, and yet your countrymen do much better than the English, because we play golf or polo in the afternoons and the Germans work all day."

Lord Cromer liked to tell a story of his former chief, to whom, as a young secretary, he had made certain political prophecies. The old statesman promptly replied: "Young man, always write down your prophecies. You will see that they never come true."

Later on, in Constantinople, I was told that Marschall had said to a friend on leaving that city: "I am going to London as Ambassador, to consolidate my Eastern policy, which is at present rather nebulous." If this story is not a posthumous invention, it was a very wise remark on the part of Marschall.

## CHAPTER III

### WASHINGTON

My appointment as Ambassador in Washington was the last favour that Prince Bilkow was able to confer upon me, and came as a complete surprise to me, as I could not have expected anything like such rapid and such high promotion. My friend Hütten Czapski wrote to me as follows on the subject:

"Smogulec, 21 11.08.

"MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,—

"Your promotion gave me no surprise, though it did give me very great pleasure.

"The advancement from Consul General to Ambassador is unique in any country. But this very fact is all the more gratifying, as *chez les coeurs bien nés, la valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années*

"A short time ago, as the result of a combination that subsequently defeated the Chancellor, there was mention of you for the post of Under Secretary. Certain gentlemen in the Foreign Ministry, who could not have hoped to maintain that you were unsuitable for the post, urged your youth and your very brief period of service. On this occasion, no account of these trivialities was rightly taken in decisive quarters.

"I have no doubt that you will do well in your new post, and that you will, at no very distant date, be transferred to that for which you are predestined.

I did not write until to-day, because I did not want to send my letter to Egypt, and assume that you will be coming to Berlin very shortly. I, too, shall be moving there soon.

W A S H I N G T O N

"There has been a bit of excitement here. I am sorry about poor Klehmet, because I regarded him as a very industrious and conscientious worker. But the sea had to have a victim.

"In true friendship,

"Yours,

"B. HUTTEN-CZAPSKI."

In connection with the above letter I should like to mention that Czapski was one of the most characteristic figures of Imperial Berlin. Everyone in society knew him, and he was to be seen everywhere. In Rome he was on familiar terms with the Pope, and in Berlin with Holstein. It was jokingly said in Berlin society that no christening or wedding or burial was complete without Czapski. He was the subject of many legends, but I cannot say that I have any but friendly recollections of him. It gave him pleasure to be everywhere, and he was much assisted by his culture and large means.

Our journey from Hamburg to America by the Hapag liner *Amerika* had been fixed for the beginning of December 1908, but I nearly missed the boat, as my audience with the Emperor was repeatedly postponed. The famous November crisis was just over, and His Majesty had withdrawn to the Neues Palais at Potsdam, where he received no one. At last, and just in time for me, Schorlemer, then *Oberpräsident* of the Rhine Province, and I, were the first guests commanded to luncheon. The Kaiser greeted me in a bantering tone: "You are much too young for an Ambassador; your hair is not yet grey. Just look at me." The Kaiserin, who had just come in, interjected: "But, Wilhelm, it is only in the last few weeks that your hair has grown so grey." At table I sat next His Majesty, who talked with much animation and gave me a great deal of information about America, more especially regarding his friend Theodore Roosevelt, who was so deeply to disappoint the Kaiser later on during the world war. His Majesty expressed the particular

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desire that I should emulate my predecessor Sternburg and travel about a great deal in the U.S.A., and make myself at home in all circles of American society

I have spoken of the November crisis, which led, though not immediately, to Bülow's fall. I often discussed this crisis with Bülow later on, when I was constantly seeing him in Berlin after the revolution, and he frankly admitted to me that an opportunity had been then lost of reforming the Reich on Liberal lines and establishing a constitutional monarchy with ministerial responsibility, and that by this means both the war and the revolution might possibly have been avoided. He had himself been powerless, as neither the German Princes nor the Reichstag would hear of any alteration of the Bismarck constitution. In any case, in 1908 at the Neue Palais I had the impression that the Kaiser had physically quite recovered, but was too depressed to resist a reform that would indeed have meant a mitigation of his own personal burden. The position, in a certain sense, resembled that in the great war, when the political responsibility passed over almost without resistance to the generals, with the distinction that, in 1908, the reform would have been on Liberal lines.

Our journey to America brought me for the first time in contact with Albert Ballin, whose friendship is one of my pleasantest memories. This gifted personality was one of the most significant of the age of Wilhelm II. He has been reproached with many contradictions in his career, but they were more apparent than real. He certainly was not a man who wore his heart upon his sleeve, but his friends always recognised the straight line that ran through all his dealings. 'Friendship is just, it alone can grasp the whole extent of a man's merit. Men of genius are more exposed than others to occasional impulses of mood and temperament. I need only recall the conversations of Bismarck, as presented in his collected works.'

Ballin's career and work are of special interest for the

historian because they coincide almost exactly with the age of Wilhelm II, and finish with it. His work—the Hapag—offered the same picture as the world policy of Germany. Both exemplify that remark of Bismarck, made in another connection, to the effect that Prussia's armament was top-heavy. The political basis of both Empire and Hapag was too weak. But while the authorities of the Reich did not recognise the danger, Ballin always realised it and did his best to urge that only the greatest caution would steer the German ship of State successfully through the breakers. He was, for that reason, fully conscious of the risks involved in Kiderlen's incurable levity. It would be unjust not to recognise Ballin's consistent and correct views in this regard. In any case, it is questionable whether any individual would have been in a position to adapt our romantic monarchy to the new age.

Ballin once wrote: "We should like to preserve the dynasty in a modified form; but it imperils its own existence by attempting to keep everything unchanged." These words hit the nail on the head. But the dynasty refused to be modernised. Only a second and more modern Bismarck could have achieved that aim, but fate was not so gracious as to send us a second Titan when the time was ripe. And yet the influence of great men still remains active after their death. Just as it was the spirit of Frederick the Great that inspired the revival of Prussia after Tilsit, and Bismarck's greatness that preserved the unity of Germany after Versailles, we have, in the last resort, to thank the genius of Ballin for the fact that the Hapag rose like a Phœnix from its ashes after the world war, with the energetic assistance of his friend, Max Warburg.

It is true that during the war Ballin now and then gave way to depression, as did all Germans who had to live within the blockade; but he saw the imminence of doom when it could still have been averted, and when he stood in this regard almost alone in Germany. I shall never forget that I spent the first evening after my melancholy home-coming from America in a

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hand, he exploited the Imperial favour in the interests of his work, who will venture to blame him? In our archaic State other methods were not feasible. All the more remarkable were the achievements of the German people in peace and war, notwithstanding their poor leadership, and among those achievements not the least was that of Albert Ballin.

I have mentioned that my period of service in America has already been described in my first book, but I cannot expect that all my present readers will have read that book, nor, if they have, that they should carry it in their minds. I must therefore apologise if this narrative contains some repetition, especially in those parts that are most important from the historical point of view.

I had been Ambassador in Washington for six years before the outbreak of the world war, and these were, indeed, the happiest years of my life. The post appealed to me in every way. I was deeply attached to the country and the people. The familiar curse of diplomatists, that they like their past and future posts but never their present ones, did not apply in my case. I was absolutely content, although my patron, Prince Bulow, had disappeared from the political stage, and I had to sacrifice the advantage of standing on familiar terms with an extremely kindly chief.

From the social point of view Washington was a delightful place, as a result of the lavish hospitality of the Americans. But the social atmosphere has now lost its former value. No one will be found to believe that politics can now be carried on in drawing-rooms, at any rate not in drawing-rooms where elegance plays any part. In this connection I had some instructive experience in America, as, at the outbreak of war, I was in close touch with all circles in the country, and also felt quite at home in "society." But these purely social relations proved worthless during the war because the so-called "Four Hundred" departed in a body into the enemy camp. The few who had the courage to swim against

small company of which Ballin was one. His sole desire then was to stop the war with the United States even at the eleventh hour, and he wanted to see me at the earliest moment with this purpose in view. A year before, he had clearly described in a letter the only possible policy: "What we must do is to try to bridge the gulf that has opened between us and America by personal negotiations through Bernstorff. At the same time President Wilson must be asked to undertake to mediate with a view to peace, in the first place because it is high time to be thinking of peace, if we do not wish to see Germany in a completely exhausted condition at the end of this war, and secondly because it is equally urgent to keep Wilson busy. If we don't do this, I am convinced we shall find ourselves slipping into another war."

As is now proved by all available American historical sources, especially Charles Seymour's excellent and comprehensive book, *American Diplomacy during the World War*, we should thus have avoided disaster.

As Ballin was of humble origin it seems all the more surprising that he should have been so pre-eminently a man of the world. One needed to cross the ocean with him on one of his splendid liners to appreciate to the full his geniality and charm and his brilliant conversation.

Comment has been made on the fact that the Emperor Wilhelm almost entirely ignores the great Hamburger in his book, but this is because His Majesty was writing from the point of view of naval policy, and based his judgments of men accordingly. Now Ballin, in spite of a few utterances that may have given a different impression, was in so far an opponent of German naval policy, as he always wanted to subordinate it to our relations with England, as did Caprivi and Paul Metternich.

Ballin has been reproached with Byzantinism and yet he was one of the few who warned the Kaiser so often and so urgently, that he was regarded at Court as a pessimist. If, on the other

hand, he exploited the Imperial favour in the interests of his work, who will venture to blame him? In our archaic State other methods were not feasible. All the more remarkable were the achievements of the German people in peace and war, notwithstanding their poor leadership, and among those achievements not the least was that of Albert Ballin.

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the stream, and remained faithful to my wife and myself from motives of personal regard, formed a notable exception. They made life personally much easier for us in that difficult time, but they exercised no political influence. On the other hand, all my other connections proved extremely useful during the war as well, namely, those of a political, economic and journalistic nature. Here is the place for a glowing tribute to our friend, Mrs. Richard Townsend, now, alas, dead. Until the war broke out, she was indisputably the first lady in Washington society. Oblivious of constant pressure and reproaches from the enemy Ambassadors, she remained true to her friendship with us until the bitter end.

Billow's successor as Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, was not a strong enough personality to make himself felt. He was a vacillating figure. One gets the impression that in his Testament, 'Observations on the World War,' he comes out of himself for the first time. In that work will be found the following remark: 'The view that a peace of understanding represented defeat was, politically speaking, an error; by maintaining our position we should have won the war.' In my opinion there can be no doubt of the correctness of this attitude, but Bethmann Hollweg did not press it with the necessary consistency and energy. He neither prepared German public opinion for such a peace nor was he able to compel the generals to subordinate their very differently conceived policy to his own. It would be unjust to blame Bethmann Hollweg on this score, for he was not a statesman of herculean strength and only such a one could have broken down the German system of military predominance. We know how bitterly Bismarck had to fight that system which proved the ruin of Germany in the end. We learn from Bethmann Hollweg that the Kaiser always agreed with his view that we should have won the war if we held out. But the Sovereign too, as is well known, gradually came under the influence of the generals. It is to be hoped that Bethmann

Hollweg's book will be widely read. This honourable and high-minded man speaks to us from the grave with the clarity and conviction in which he was so sorely lacking while he lived. If indeed he was too weak to break down the old system, which was therefore destined to collapse of itself, we may yet learn from his Testament why we lost the war. The average German citizen is still very far from possessing this knowledge, though in political matters self-knowledge is the first step towards improvement. It was our political inadequacy that led us into the abyss—a political inadequacy that flung us helpless at the mercy of an incompetent military dictatorship. We can only be saved by political-training that will enable the whole German people to see the world as it really is, and not as we should like to represent it. The proverb to the effect that every man is the founder of his own fortune applies also to the nations.

It was Bethmann's ill-fortune that he chose as Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry the very man who was least fitted for the post. Very possibly Bethmann's vacillating habit of mind was attracted by the hypertrophied self-confidence from which Kiderlen suffered. The latter did, indeed, compose memoranda on an understanding with England, but to the English-speaking world he remained an alien and unpopular figure. He thought he could always get his way by overbearing methods, which, in politics, produced the effect of a bull in a china shop. The failure at Agadir, and of Haldane's decisive visit to Berlin, must be laid to his account. On the latter occasion he was apparently not even present in Berlin, if the biography of him by his friend Jackh is to be trusted. When Jagow succeeded him, it was too late to allay the tension.

My experiences with Kiderlen were of an almost comic nature, especially as ill-manners always affect me as being humorous. When we were having difficulties with the United States regarding the delivery of potash to America, and I was on leave in Berlin, the then American Ambassador tried to ease

matters by a little dinner party for men, at which only six persons sat down. But Kiderlen could not be brought to discuss these difficulties at all. And he took occasion to make one of his usual tactless remarks that has remained in my mind. In the course of the familiar discussion of the respective merits of various diplomatic posts, Kiderlen observed that he had never been outside Europe. When I expressed my surprise, he added in a loud voice, though he was sitting next the American Ambassador "No, thank God, never

When Kiderlen made his unlucky panther leap to Agadir, he left the German Ambassador, whom he could not endure, without any news on the Morocco question. The American Press, in the absence of any information, unanimously turned against us. After some time I received a sharp telegram from Kiderlen, more or less making me responsible for this attitude on the part of the American Press. I replied with equal directness that his telegram was the first word that I had heard about Morocco, so that I was not in a position to give the Press any information—a communication to which I received no reply

Whatever may be thought of Kiderlen's divagations, it is quite certain that Billow would never have kept him in Berlin for any length of time, for he described him to me as a savage dog who ought to have been left on the chain in Bucharest

My experiences in Washington as a result of Bethmann's vacillations made me feel disposed to give up the diplomatic service as soon as possible, for it can only be of any value when there exists a relation of confidence between the Ambassador and his chief. I may here give two relatively unimportant but characteristic instances. The first occurred before the war, and related to the San Francisco World Exhibition which was to take place in 1914 for the opening of the Panama Canal. The Americans hoped that there would be active co-operation on the part of other countries. I had accordingly proposed that Germany should

take a prominent and suitable part, thinking that it would be greatly to our advantage. When I first mentioned the matter by word of mouth at the Foreign Ministry I was told that it had been decided that Germany should participate, and that I need not trouble myself any further on the matter. Bethmann himself said the same thing to me a few days later. So I went back to Washington in the firm conviction that the affair was in order, and I reported in that sense to Berlin regarding the further preparations. . . . Then, as a bolt out of the blue, I received a private letter from the appropriate official in the Foreign Ministry to the effect that I was not to regard our participation in the exhibition as settled, as this was very far from being the case. I could not at that time go at once to Berlin, but I telegraphed instead to my friend Ballin, asking him to take the matter up, as he was considerably interested, and suggesting that he should speak to the Emperor about it. In his reply, Ballin said he had not put the matter up to His Majesty, as Bethmann had told him that it had been decided that Germany should take part in the exhibition. Scarcely had I received this telegram than the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that Germany would not be represented at the exhibition. It would be quite contrary to my views to dispute the Government's right to take any decision it chose. It is for the diplomat to obey: and that he gladly does when he knows where he is. In this case, to crown everything, on my next visit to Berlin I received a letter from the Chancellor disapproving of my dealings with Theodor Wolff, who had written in the *Berliner Tageblatt* in favour of the private exhibition which Ballin was then anxious to arrange in San Francisco. In the end, as a result of the troubles in Mexico and the world war, all turned out very differently from what we poor mortals had proposed.

The other case occurred during the war, in the year 1916. My wife was in Germany, and had been granted a safe-conduct by the English to return to Washington, on condition that she

took nothing in writing addressed to me. Before she left Berlin she had tea with the Chancellor, who gave her the following instruction by word of mouth. "Tell your husband that if he cannot bring about a peace in the meantime, we shall be forced to declare unrestricted U boat war on February 1st." With this blessing my wife departed. She had not landed in New York when I received an at first incomprehensible telegram that ran roughly as follows. 'If the Countess Bernstorff has understood that we were intending to declare an unrestricted U boat war on February 1st, there has been a misunderstanding. It would seriously damage our policy if it were assumed that we had any such purpose.'

When I was Counsellor of Embassy in London, one of my colleagues was Freiherr von dem Bussche Haddenhausen, who was kindness itself in helping me to clear out the Augean stable of papers and intrigues left behind by Eckardstein. Since then, until to-day, that is for thirty two years, we have been friends and in correspondence.

Here follow some of my letters to Bussche from America. In order to preserve their original freshness, only very little has been omitted. Bussche was at that time Minister in Buenos Aires and later, Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Ministry.

Washington January 16th, 1911

MY DEAR BUSSCHE,—

'We get very few reports from other missions here however I do get those that interest me most namely those on England, South America, and the Far East.'

As regards the internal situation here, it is very difficult to give a definite judgment owing to the vacillation of America's public opinion. To-day I should say that Roosevelt is for the present finished, that Taft will be put up as a candidate for the Presidency next year, but will be defeated by Wilson. It may

of course, turn out quite differently, but in any case I regard the re-election of Roosevelt as out of the question, as the whole of Big Business will mobilise against him.

"It seems probable that Harmon, who is regarded as a Conservative Democrat, will receive the support of the Railway Companies and the Trusts, so that it appears to me doubtful whether a Democratic victory will result in any economic depression. I also do not believe in any considerable lowering of the tariff. But something must be done in this direction, for the Democrats were carried to victory exclusively through the tariff. Therein lay Roosevelt's great mistake, in that he flung himself into a hopeless election struggle, for the outcome of which he will be made rather undeservedly responsible. The confusion of the internal situation has much strengthened Taft's hitherto weak position. Owing to the incompetence of the present State Department I myself must rely on Taft, as all the other pillars have become shaky; even Lodge is afraid of losing his seat in the Senate to-morrow. Crane is now the confidential man of the White House, but as he is not on the 'Foreign Office Committee' he cannot help me much, and Root unfortunately seems to be rather ill. The Senate will present quite a new picture in December. The German Press, however, exaggerate the significance of the elections, as most of the changes are more of a personal than a positive character.

"I don't think that Taft will undertake any considerable diplomatic changes. It seems that Strauss is the only Ambassador who will retire. Harry White's prospects are consequently very poor. . . .

"The potash question is certainly unpleasant, but I hope that a way out will be found in Berlin. Taft is not taking the matter tragically. To me personally the Liberia question is more unpleasant, because England and France have agreed without demur to the American proposals, and I am left to oppose them alone.

"In case the intention is that you really should not receive my reports on Latin America, I would observe that a strong pressure has been put on the Mexican, Brazilian, Argentine, and Chilean Ministers, to obtain preferential tariffs, or rather, more preferential tariffs. The greatest efforts were made in regard to Mexico, the Minister being told that the others were merely waiting for Mexico to move, in order to follow her good example. But De La Barra assures me definitely that the intention in Mexico is to adhere to the European conception of most favoured nation clauses.

"The general opinion of England here seems to be that the British are paralysed by their internal situation. Taft is not very accessible on the subject of England, as he finds so little help there for his favourite policy in the Far East.

"Washington. March 24th, 1911

Next week Congress will meet to debate the Canadian agreement. The Democratic House of Representatives will also propose a revision of the tariff. It is not at all clear what the result will be, as the House will perhaps combine both subjects and thus destroy the Canadian agreement. According to our experience, it would in any case be better if they all went home again as soon as possible nothing much will come of tinkering with the tariff, and the resulting uneasiness will do more harm to trade than the tariffs.

I personally cannot complain of Lodge. He is always very accessible which is possibly explained by the fact that we are on friendly terms with his whole family. Lodge and Root will certainly control the Foreign Committee of the Senate, as the other members are either enfeebled by age or without experience. With the improving weather Root seems to have recovered his health.

If you get Huntington Wilson as Minister at Buenos Ayres

you will be out of the frying-pan into the fire, except for the fact that his wife is very pretty and agreeable. Wilson is the *bête noire* of the Diplomatic Corps, as he is tactless and insincere. If you get any information out of him at all it is sure to be false. Moreover he is the typical representative of 'Dollar Diplomacy.'

"American affairs are rather neglected in Berlin, and I hope that with Montgelas an element will appear in the Foreign Ministry that will show some interest in transatlantic matters. The tone of the German Press regarding the United States is persistently unfriendly, and really needs to be continually influenced from official quarters. Nothing appears to be done at present in this direction. At the moment, indeed, German interest has been awakened in rather unwelcome fashion by the Mexican affair. Our Press concocts a mass of preposterous nonsense, all of which is unfortunately regularly telegraphed across by Wile. The latter is quite uncontrollable since he unfortunately got that sabre-cut in Moabit. You can also imagine that I greatly regret your absence from the Foreign Ministry. The situation here will always be judged there in accordance with European standards, which of course do not apply. In the treatment of American affairs there is always a lack of a certain humour, which is needed in dealing with the rather no position here. In any case, I hope that the two unpleas questions, potash and Liberia, will soon be settled.

"It is long since there has been any question of an arbitration treaty with America, as the present régime in Germany is extraordinarily averse to anything of the kind. I also think that nothing will come of the so-called Taft plans, partly because the Senate will have nothing to do with them. But Taft believes that he needs the supporters of peace for his re-election. Indeed, this is the prevailing influence at present. Otherwise there would not have been a treaty with Canada, the main object of which was to reduce the cost of living. And now the Mexican crisis will be

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

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utilised to secure a similar treaty with Mexico. For the time being, however, Mexico is insisting on the European interpretation of the most favoured nation clauses.

"In social matters the winter was extraordinarily lively. You will perhaps have read in the papers that Taft appeared unannounced at the ball which we gave for his daughter. We closed the season on Monday with my daughter's wedding at which the whole Taft family—this time invited—were present.

'I assume that the President will visit other Ambassadors in the course of next year, which has not previously been the custom.

Washington. 175 1911

'Hill has been personally dismissed by Taft, partly because his handling of the potash question did not give satisfaction and partly because Taft, for reasons of internal policy, wanted to make certain diplomatic appointments. I have not much cared for Hill during the past winter: he made all sorts of unnecessary difficulties as in the potash question, and regarding the exchange professors and certain newspaper correspondents. He seems to have a false estimation of the new régime in the Foreign Ministry. We are suffering at the moment from the heat, which has come very early this year. Pauli, who arrived recently from Cuba said he thought it was warmer here than there. Perhaps the heat will induce the Senate to make up their minds. They would gladly drop the Canadian agreement, but do not quite like to do so, because Taft would lose all chance of re-election and there is no other Republican candidate available.'

Washington June 9th 1911

There has arisen in Berlin latterly a certain ill-feeling against the régime here on account of Davis's dealings in the potash question and Falkner's proceedings in the Liberia affair. Both matters have since then been settled to our entire satisfaction.

faction, by the disavowal of the actions of both these officials, which in the one case went so far that Hill had to pay the score. In any event I cannot find that the relations between the two governments leave anything to be desired, for after all one must not allow a political difference to arise out of the arbitrary acts of subordinate officials. In Berlin it is not always understood that we are not here dealing with trained and disciplined officials after the German pattern.

"The Canadian Reciprocity Agreement is doubtless very unwelcome to us, but much more so to the English. We must naturally take counter-measures in case the treaty is ratified by the Senate, but we have no ground of offence with the United States on that account.

"Finally, as regards the Arbitration Treaty, it is unfortunately our fault if the English have been able to bluff the world into believing that it represented an approach to the English Power-group. We could ourselves have taken the matter up (as the French did), as Taft and Knox had made it quite clear that they would conclude the treaty with every Power who was ready to enter into it. But our attitude was one of entire refusal, until the outcry in the Press over the imminent English-American alliance became too extravagant. Whether our jurists will put us in the same position as they did three years ago I cannot judge from here; but I fear it is only too likely. However, any satisfaction that the English may have felt with the treaty was completely destroyed by our *démarche*, just as Taft much disliked the talk of an alliance with England. He was quite relieved when I asked for a draft of the treaty so that I could negotiate with the United States on the subject.

"I don't think the Pan-American business will come to much. Since the Mexican revolution the atmosphere in the whole of Latin America seems very bitter against the United States, and the Senate here much dislikes Knox's policy. The latter has not proved very fortunate of late.

"The new Ambassador for Berlin is not yet appointed. Taft and Knox are wrapped in silence. Sherrill is after the post, treats us with marked friendliness, and incidentally got himself invited to my daughter's wedding through his sister. But it is said that the Senate is against the appointment. There are rumours that Knox means to send Leischman to Berlin, but, as I have indicated, all is at present very uncertain.

I will try to maintain good relations with Da Gama, when we meet in the autumn. For the moment everybody is away, as always happens here in the summer.

'My Embassy is again at full strength with Haniel, Kienlin and Horstmann. I myself have been travelling about latterly, visiting friends in the country and making contacts in various parts. I shall, as I said go on leave, I hope, on July 4th, so that this will very likely be my last letter until further notice. The Senate is making endless trouble over the Canadian agreement, and no one can now say whether it will finally be ratified. But there is no reason why I should be here on that account.'

'Washington. Dec. 6th, 1911

'When I was at the Foreign Ministry in Berlin there was such ill feeling there against England that the refusal of the Canadian agreement was generally regretted. The affair is now buried and it is now useless to discuss the consequences that it might have brought about. As everybody here is now intent upon the elections the failure of the Reciprocity Treaty is now regarded almost exclusively from the point of view that Mr. Taft's prospects of re-election are as good as ruined. But there is still a possibility that at the eleventh hour the President may get a revision of the tariff accepted but he does not himself seem to cherish much hope of that.'

'You are certainly right that the Press here took sides against us during the Morocco affair but I rather doubt whether this

was solely due to Germanophobia. I am much more inclined to believe that we could have secured the complete impartiality which is the favourite attitude of the U.S.A. in European matters, if we had wanted to do so. But unfortunately in all matters affecting the Press there has been a complete reaction in Berlin. The whole thing ought to have been managed quite differently, as used to be the case, but perhaps the great failure of this summer will produce the needed reversal. During the Morocco negotiations, as far as the Press was concerned, we deliberately left the field to the English and French, so that we have only ourselves to thank for the result. In the meantime the matter has been settled, and we shall have to begin the work again on a new foundation, and we set our hands to it with a prestige that is, here at any rate, seriously diminished.

"In the meantime John Garrett has been appointed Minister in Buenos Aires, and thinks to take up the post in January. You know both of them. At any rate I met Mrs. Garrett in your house. Since then I have seen both of them often, as we have a number of friends in common. You will find Garrett an extremely pleasant colleague; at the same time you may find the competition rather tiresome, as they both take immense trouble, and are very ambitious and rich. We are on excellent terms with them here, but the situation is of course entirely changed when an American diplomat gets to South America. In the last few weeks I have seen a great deal of the Garretts.

"The internal political situation is utterly confused. Many people believe that Roosevelt will again be nominated by the Republicans, because there seems no chance of an agreement on Taft or La Follette. The nomination of Bryan is out of the question, but he may perhaps have enough power to prevent the nomination of a reasonable Democrat. My view is that it is a matter of indifference to us who is elected President, as no individual would be likely to bring about any real movement in our favour or against us. But I must defend Taft against the

suspicion of being especially Anglophil—a suspicion which is moreover emphasised by Münsterberg in the new edition of his book. Apart from the unlucky attempt to play a significant role in Far Eastern affairs, Taft has only made two moves in the sphere of foreign policy—namely, the negotiations for the Canadian reciprocity agreement and the arbitration treaty. Both were based mainly on motives affecting internal policy. But the first had a definitely anti English tendency, and failed mainly because Taft was too open in emphasising that fact. Nor are the arbitration treaties to be regarded as in any way foreshadowing an approach to England. This attitude, which I have always emphasised in my reports, has now been strengthened by Taft himself in his *Outlook* interview. The treaties were concluded with France and England because Sir Edward Grey and Jusserand were prompt in signifying their agreement. We could, and should, have done the same, if we had not been wedded to the erroneous policy of putting up an at any rate passive resistance to the popular movement in favour of arbitration. But I hope I have succeeded in inducing Berlin to conclude such a treaty, in the event of the Senate approving the two others.

Washington. 6.3 1912

'The appointment of Myron Herrick to Paris has been a great surprise here as Taft had always intended to send professional diplomats to the more important posts, but he is now thinking of the elections and consequently resolved to send a popular man from Ohio so as to win over the voters in that State.'

I have seen very little of the Argentine Naon. He has remained an absolute stranger here by his own fault. Neither he nor his wife thought it necessary to pay any calls. Madame Naon had not even made an attempt to get introduced to the Ambassador etc. You can imagine how popular she has made herself with Madame Jusserand for example. Under these circumstances we only

invited the pair once to a reception. I don't know who gave these people such bad advice, but Naon now seems to have realised his mistake. When I met him a little while ago in Pittsburg he was very friendly, but it was quite clear that he was not at all happy here. He now thinks of taking a prolonged leave, and will probably not be sent back again. On the other hand, the Brazilian Da Gama is doing admirably. He is not at all addicted to Pan-Americanism, he has been very attentive, and is indeed generally much liked. . . .

"The Commercial Treaty difficulties are not very great, as we have luckily concluded the new treaties with Japan and Sweden just at the right moment. The preferences embodied in these treaties we have withheld from the Americans, so as in some measure to save our face. I tried to persuade the authorities in Berlin that, in this case, we had better propose a court of arbitration. Unfortunately I did not get them to agree, and the favourable moment is now lost, for the proposal will now be combined with our negotiations for a treaty of arbitration, while it would have made a greater impression before the decision of the Senate.

"This year all other interests pale before the elections. We are still in the middle of the struggle, although there are more than eight months before the decisive day. In the Republican party there is a conflict between the machine and the voters. The majority of the latter want Roosevelt in the White House in any event, but the powerful conservative machine would like to secure the nomination for Taft, if the gallery in Chicago does not upset all calculations. If Roosevelt is nominated, he will almost certainly be elected. If on the other hand Taft is nominated, the breach within the Republican Party may become so great that the Democrats will secure the victory. It is, however, completely uncertain who will be the Democratic candidate. The chief rivals are the conservative Harmon and the radical Wilson, but neither of them may obtain the necessary two-thirds majority, so

that the dark horses such as Champ Clark, Underwood, and Senator Kern of Indiana have quite good prospects of nomination. Your friend Mrs. Hobson is well and cheerful. When I called on her one Sunday a little while ago she told me she had just written to you and sent you my *Outlook* article. I told her she need not have done that, as you took in the *Outlook*. However, the issue in question was completely sold out. You can imagine that I had a great deal of trouble to persuade the Foreign Ministry to allow me to write such an article. Since then I have used the China Notes to improve our relations with the U.S.A., so that for the moment the situation is as favourable as it could be. But we shall take a step back again if we do not take part in the arbitration treaties."

Washington June 26th, 1912

"

As regards German English relations it is difficult to form a judgment here, as I do not know what is going on behind the scenes. In any case, the Foreign Ministry was very annoyed at the increase in the fleet. However, after this had once been put through by Tirpitz, there was plainly an attempt to mitigate the effect by Marshall's appointment to London. Fortunately the English have their hands more than full with troubles.

The political situation here is so confused that no man could venture to prophesy. Taft owes his nomination entirely to the influence of the machine. He has no support in public opinion and hence little prospect of being elected. Roosevelt's prospects are not bad, if he succeeds in organising his new Progressive Party quickly enough. I came back from Chicago the day before yesterday, where I had been staying for a week with friends, and I visited the Convention. Everyone there seems pro-Roosevelt. Yesterday I was in Baltimore, and I propose to go there again to-morrow. The radical tendency seems there to be in abeyance which would be very favourable to Roosevelt. As matters

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stand, the Democrats must win owing to the split in the Republican Party, but they have no really popular candidate.

"We can at present be extremely pleased with German-American relations. The visit of our fleet was a success that exceeded our boldest hopes. The fraternisation among the officers, and the reception by the Press, went far beyond my expectations.

"I hope that the action against the North Atlantic Steamship Co. will finally be allowed to drop. Ballin isn't taking the matter tragically and does not want anything done to prevent this. Nor did the relief of the coastal shipping from Panama Canal dues excite him very much, so that we have kept quiet on that subject also. In the first affair something may perhaps be achieved by not being too forward with our acceptance of the invitation to the exhibition at San Francisco. They are much concerned that we should send to this exhibition.

"In Berlin there seems to be a continuous crisis. Personally I should prefer matters to remain exactly as they are. I now get on in general so well with the present régime that I have no complaints. On Oct. 21st I propose to get back here, so that I can hardly hope to see you in Europe."

"Washington. 3.3.1913.

" . . . . .

"On the Anglo-American question—in other words, the naval question—I am in entire agreement with you. I wrote to you, I think, from Berlin that an understanding could be easily reached as soon as Tirpitz was ready to anchor down on a definite fleet plan.

"Here we are in the midst of a change of government. It is therefore almost impossible to send you any interesting news, as one must first wait to see how the new brooms will sweep. Nor do I expect much from tariff revision, and I have constantly reported in this sense to Berlin. Things could not be worse for the shipping companies than they were before. This Embassy

has become a sort of General Agency for them. During the past winter shipping questions took up almost all my time. In any case I hope that the Democrats, in the extra Session, will deal exclusively with the customs tariffs and not originate any more lunatic laws.

' The popular voice has spoken so definitely against any interference in Mexico that no intervention is to be feared if Huerta succeeds in establishing some sort of stable conditions. It is at last realised that resources for a conquest of Mexico are wanting, and that it would be much easier to get into Mexico than out of it again.

I naturally regret the change of government, because I lose so many friends, and must now work with *homines novi*. In my next letter I hope to have some more interesting news for you, as I shall then be in the position to recognise *ex uestre leonem*. The main question really is whether Wilson and Bryan can get on together in the long run.

Washington 21 1914

The expected incident arrived punctually in connection with the failure of the Frisco affair, and found expression in a heated Press campaign. I hope I may be mistaken, but as I said to everyone in Berlin who would listen to me, I still believe that this business will do us harm, not only here but in England too. It will there be said that we tried to stir up trouble between the Anglo-Saxon cousins, and the affair will ultimately produce a lamentable repercussion in England, as in the Venezuela question. Unfortunately we never learn from our errors. I am the first to recognise that our political relations with England are more important than any others but we must completely discount America in the matter for it is a fact of experience that the English never hold their ground against the Americans. Though this is for you who know the Americans an open secret. Unfortunately the Frisco question was decided in the meantime

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on the advice of persons who are ignorant of the situation here, and accept at their face value the observations of the Consulate-General in New York and the Consulate in San Francisco. These were tellingly described by Bassermann in the Reichstag as 'more or less valueless Consuls' reports' And now we have to eat the soup that we have brewed."

"Washington. 12.6.1914.

" . . . . .

"I hope the question of your appointment will soon be settled. I don't know whether I shall now be able to get any leave. The English and French Ambassadors are both going on leave, so that I really don't see why I should stay here, especially as the Mexican question may drag on for years.

"Apart from the commercial losses and the mistake we made over the 'Ypiranga,' the Mexican question is a godsend to us, as 'Frisco' is now quite forgotten I assume that the celebrations over the opening of the Panama Canal will be severely cut down under the existing circumstances. I shall be extremely surprised if Mexico has been pacified by that date. I am quite of your opinion that the acceptance of mediation by the A.B.C. has greatly diminished American prestige. I have always reported to Berlin in this sense. But Bryan is a 'peace at any price' man, and has much involved the President in many matters. For us it is always advantageous if South America plucks up courage and obtains greater freedom of action, though we can pretty well write off the countries to the North of the Panama Canal.

" . . . . .

"With heartiest greetings from all of us,

"J. BERNSTORFF."

At that time my anger over the Frisco affair was so great that I expressed my views to another friend, namely Sigfrid Heckscher, Director of the Hapag, and member of the Reichstag.

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

In the following letter only a few unimportant passages have been omitted.

*'Washington. 30.12.1913*

"

' As regards the negotiations over Frisco in the Budget Commission, the whole performance was mere eyewash, as the sole ground for the Government's attitude of refusal was the pledge to England. The Chancellor told me this in so many words, after Lichnowsky, quite rightly from his point of view had said that our participation at Frisco would be regarded by the English as a felony. Under these circumstances our Government could do nothing else but discount the importance of the Frisco exhibition, as they were not willing to give the real reason for their attitude of refusal. In any case it was not necessary to have given a pledge to England. The fact that it was so given may be referred to various machinations.

' Under the above circumstances it is really superfluous to go into the actual motives that were brought forward by the Government. The notorious—there is no other word for it—report from the Consulate in San Francisco was written to order and post festum. I made no comment on it there was no sense in my doing so after I had talked to the Chancellor and agreed with him that there was nothing more to be done, as we were pledged as regards England. The report was a farce of nonsense and I am really surprised that anyone had the courage to read it aloud in the Budget Committee. It is ludicrous to maintain on the one hand that the Press agitation here is merely a machination of Hearst's, and on the other that we must use the occasion to show our teeth at the Americans. The two arguments are absolutely inconsistent. Moreover Hearst is not at all anti German. He is indeed anti English, but that is hardly a matter for regret on our part. He lately observed in his chief newspaper that it was astonishing that a so obviously friendly disposed Power like

Germany should combine with a notoriously hostile Power like England to annoy the Americans. At the moment Hearst is doing us a good turn with his lively agitation against the 'Seamen's Bill.' Moreover, the comic misunderstanding regarding the *Sun* speaks volumes in itself. The *Sun* is the most conservative newspaper in the United States.

"The most regrettable feature of the whole affair is the revelation of the fact that we have no 'world policy.' America, a country now so near to us, is for our official circles a *terra incognita*, the United States, so soon to be the greatest Power in the world, a *quantité négligeable*. Otherwise we should never have entered into such a *societas leonina* with England, in which we have to content ourselves with the wild ass's share. It is plainly England's interest to keep us out of a rivalry in which we should certainly prevail.

"The result is this: in the political sphere we have put official circles here against us, in the commercial sphere we have missed the opportunity of resisting a Pan-Americanism that is very dangerous to us; and from the national and cultural points of view, we discouraged the German Americans and ignored our mission in history. We ought at least to have organised an outstanding art exhibition, as all our artists complain that there is no market for their work in the United States.

"Well, all such hopes are buried now. And yet we must not lose courage. Everyone who knows America is warm in my support, including my friend Bussche, I am glad to say. If he does get an appointment in the Ministry, better times will be soon at hand.

"By the way, has Sudekum said anything special about me? You will have heard that certain circles in Berlin were very angry at the news that I had received him here. These people make bad blood behind my back but never mention the matter to my face. I hope Mexico may help us over Frisco."

The final paragraph of the above letter needs an explanation. Südekum, who was a Social Democrat member of the Reichstag, was recommended to me by a friend, Alfred Zimmermann, Director of the Scherl Publishing House, and formerly Colonial Attaché at the Embassy in London, and he called on me in Washington. I then asked him to lunch. On this account people slandered me to the Kaiser, who was told I was a Social Democrat myself and disloyal to the monarchy, and all the other kind things that reactionaries are accustomed to say on such occasions. I have never regarded myself as in any way to blame. I was of the opinion that when a Social Democrat calls of his own free will at the Imperial Embassy, he is to be treated like any other German, but only on that condition. Another time Gompers, the leader of the American workmen, came to me and said that Legien was in Washington, and President Wilson had been informed of his presence. But the President would not receive him without my *placet*. I said to Gompers that I would gladly give Legien my consent if he came to me. Upon which I heard no more of the matter.

"A man convinced against his will remains of the same opinion still." I never hoped that the first volume of my Reminiscences would convince any political enemies who from considerations of party or any other reasons were already set in a definite direction. My purpose really was to describe the course of our national tragedy, so far as I myself had had a hand in it, in the interest of my country, so that the German people who had never been properly informed on the subject should know what errors were committed by our policy in the age of Wilhelm II, and how such errors might be avoided in the future.

From the report laid by Professor Hocricht before the Investigation Committee of the Reichstag I was very glad to observe that a trained historian had in general reached the same conclusions as mine regarding our American policy.

belongs to another school of political thought. I especially agree with Professor Hoetzschi in his view that there is no question of any guilt in the moral sense. The only connection in which the phrase could be used, if at all, would be in the collective sense of the "Age of Imperialism," as our epoch has been described by the historian Heinrich Friedjung, who died so prematurely.

On the other hand, the idea of historic guilt is not to be gainsaid. The national egoism of States has always been the accepted foundation of international policy. As long as national egoism is not replaced by a more ideal world order than the present one, the foreign policy of a State must be judged by the consideration whether the national egoism of rival States has been met by the right or the wrong methods. If wrong methods are constantly employed at decisive moments, such proceeding must inevitably lead to defeat. Herein lies the historic guilt of the Wilhelmian age, and it would be to little purpose to attempt to evade it, as every unprejudiced historian will pronounce just as stern a verdict on the errors of the age of German world policy as upon those of the age of Frederick William II and Frederick William IV. How otherwise could the revolution have occurred? Only reactionary politicians can seriously maintain that revolution can be artificially produced. History teaches the opposite on every page of its record. The agitator's match can only produce an explosion when there is explosive material at hand.

The Nationalist English newspapers have seized on my rejection of our alleged moral guilt to criticise my narrative in the sense that I judge all questions exclusively from the standpoint of a utilitarian *Realpolitik*, and ignore both political and moral ideals, while my political enemies at home delight in describing me as an ideologue. Here is further proof of the deep gulf that still divides Germany's attitude from that of other countries—a spiritual gulf that must be bridged if there is to be any reconciliation between the nations. I am convinced that

politics and morality are indissolubly wedded, and that a policy that is not guided by moral considerations will find no mercy before the tribunal of world history, though it may achieve a passing success.

It is another question whether the victor should constitute himself a judge of the morality of his vanquished enemy's imperialistic policy, so long as he himself, as is proved by the terms of the Peace of Versailles, is still governed by imperialistic ideas. As Prince Bismarck used to say, Statesmen ought not to drag Almighty God into the business. The words punishment, reward and revenge have no place in politics. Such motives only lead to fresh injustices. To-day we see quite clearly that the Peace of Versailles, of which the main object was the penalisation of Germany, must be revised if it is not to plunge the whole of Europe into misery, quite apart from the fact that this Peace is based upon the breach of an undertaking, which at least counter balances the violation of Belgian neutrality. In any case, it would have been better policy to have consistently vindicated the breach of international law committed by us, which we had from the first openly acknowledged. Such an attitude would, I feel sure, have averted many evil consequences.

As I was not personally concerned in the Belgian question and have only incidentally touched upon it the English critics direct their attacks against my views on the U boat war. They complain that I treated this, owing to the attitude of the United States, as a political error but not as a moral crime. But anyone who does not recognise the moral reprehensibility of the English blockade loses the right to pronounce judgment on the moral justification of the U boat war. Did not the American Government which was certainly not prejudiced in our favour describe the English blockade in its Note of October 21st 1916 as neither legal nor defensible? But if this unprejudiced testimony is not regarded as decisive, because the Americans after their entry into the war, themselves took part in the blockade.

I am afraid that this objection, so far from establishing the Allied contention, merely serves to show that war has been conducted by all Powers on the principle of—"Everything is fair in love and war."

In any case, the melancholy fact remains that the blockade killed more women and children than the U-boat war.

A very well-considered criticism of my attitude is to be found in the report laid before the Investigation Committee of the National Assembly by Freiherr von Romberg. If I were to deal with this report in detail, I should have to repeat all the motives and arguments that I set out in my first volume, which I can scarcely do, for fear of wearying my readers. But I must devote a few words to the more important contentions put forward in the report, all the more as, since the publication of the first volume, much valuable material has been published that serves to confirm my attitude.

Romberg says: "I cannot believe that the Entente, at a moment when they were so justifiably certain of their victory, would have sacrificed their war aims owing to financial difficulties. . . . Count Bernstorff was not informed of our military position, and by his own account always proceeded from the false assumption that we were not to be defeated unless America came into the war, and that consequently we had plenty of time to await the effects of an American attempt at mediation." In this connection Romberg contends that the financial difficulties of the Entente at the critical time were unknown to us.

This line of argument can, at best, merely serve the purpose of exculpating the Imperial Government from the reproach made against it by the Investigation Committee that "at the turning point in Germany's destiny it consented to a policy that it knew to be dangerous." True it is that the political authorities of the Reich took their decision because they thought, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they could not act otherwise. It is also true that they were of opinion that the financial

difficulties of the Entente were not considerable enough to balance our unfavourable military position. None the less, the historian must conclude that the decision taken was not the right one. I cannot admit that the financial difficulties of the Entente were not known to us, for I had submitted full reports on the subject. But the value attached to them naturally depended on the individual views of the person concerned. I may to-day appeal to Keynes's testimony, which Romberg has also quoted in another connection. In the book that has now become a classic the Cambridge Professor observes: "Very few persons can fully realise how hopeless the task of the English Treasury would soon have become without the assistance of the United States Treasury. After the United States came into the war her financial assistance was lavish and unstinted, and without this assistance the Allies could never have won the war, quite apart from the decisive influence of the arrival of the American troops."<sup>1</sup>

In this connection, too, one who is generally recognised as an authority, and who stood at the very centre point of events, reached the same conclusion as mine. Lord Grey too, writes: "We should have had to accept the Wilson peace without a victory as we were entirely dependent on the United States.

As regards the military position, I cannot accept the fact that I was wrongly informed. On the contrary, I always held the view that after the first battle of the Marne we were no longer in a position to obtain a military victory by force of arms, while the Supreme Army Command hoped to obtain one as late as the beginning of the year 1918. Before the Investigation Committee of the National Assembly it was generally recognised that the U boat war had no real influence on the conduct of the war by land. Our military position would not have deteriorated had the U boat war never been undertaken and would have allowed

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Consequences of the Peace* by J. R. Keynes. 1923. 2nd footnote

us to wait for American mediation to mature. What then, according to human calculation, would have been the course of events had the Imperial Government, abandoning all idea of securities and annexations, accepted American mediation with a view to a peace without victory? In the first place, the Entente would have had to give up all hope of the United States entering the war, and would thus have lost the most important diplomatic battle of the war. If, as Romberg maintains, the Entente had then had such good reason for being so certain of victory, this confidence would certainly not have survived the altered circumstances. In case the financial difficulties did not suffice to incline the Entente to treat for peace, the Russian revolution would certainly have brought about this result. I am to-day just as firmly convinced as I was at the critical time that my view of the situation was the correct one, and will be confirmed by history, the more so as my fundamental attitude has not been disputed by the English and American critics. And I have a good deal of confirmatory evidence from very competent quarters in the United States.

My attitude has been borne out in a number of details since the publication of my first book. Gabriel Hanotaux, the well-known former Foreign Minister, has stated that France was ready to treat for peace in September, 1914, but was prevented from doing so by England. Moreover, three American Ambassadors had then appeared at Bordeaux, then the seat of the French Government, and had declared that at that time only 50,000 Americans desired to enter the war, but that the day was not far distant when a hundred millions would be converted to that desire. This revelation was no surprise to those well acquainted with American affairs. The three Ambassadors in question, Messrs. Bacon, Herrick and Sharpe, were always well known as partisans of the Entente. And they bent themselves to bring about that "conversion" of American public opinion which they then predicted. All the more valuable is the statement

that only 50,000 Americans wanted to enter the war. That hits the nail on the head, and must at last make clear to the most obstinately minded the essential meaning of the diplomatic conflict in Washington. It was a struggle for the soul of the American nation, in which the Entente could not have conquered had the unlimited U boat war not been started. After the *Lusitania* incident, the conversion of American public opinion was as good as achieved. Before that there had been slow movement in our favour which had so far extended by the end of 1916 that we had almost won the game.

When my first book was published Wilson was still alive. Hence any observations on his policy had to be modified if not omitted. Since then death has lowered the curtain over a human tragedy that also became the tragedy of Europe. The man who wanted to be *arbiter mundi* was shattered by the magnitude of his task. Like Moses on Mount Pisgah Wilson saw the Promised Land, but he did not reach it. The world applauded his purpose overmuch, and then passed too harsh a judgment on his want of power to carry it out. The war stands too near to us in time for any certain historical verdict to be passed on its beginning, its course, and its end. We come upon prejudice on either side, which bedounds the judgment, but no personality has been so variously presented as that of President Wilson. He was a Professor and a historian, but his great self confidence and ambition made him prefer to make history rather than to write it. Luck was kind to Wilson and a split in the Republican Party at the right moment provided him with an easy victory in the fight for the Presidency. His obstinate dogmatism and his inclination for solitary work made him little suited to foreign politics. Internal questions can be solved by a theorist from his own writing-table if he has gone into them with proper care but foreign affairs can only be mastered in actual practice. Eloquent orations can sway a nation and convince a parliament but they are of little use when the interests and the armed



COUNT BERNSTORFF AT THE WASHINGTON EMBASSY, 1916



might of foreign Powers are vigorously engaged.

Just because Wilson, as an orator, was so magnificent an exponent of American ideals, but, as a statesman, managed to realise so few of them in practice, he is often regarded, especially in Germany, as a hypocrite and a betrayer. This is a mistaken judgment, as anyone can testify who knew Wilson well, and I am in a particular position to do so, having been accredited to him as Ambassador for four years. The common suggestion that one who was betrayed is here writing about his betrayer cannot be maintained in the face of the American historical material now available. It is enough to read Wilson's own book, and those of Page, Lane, House and Seymour, to form a clear picture of Wilson's policy. My own judgment has been somewhat modified by these books, and especially by the last-mentioned. I had hitherto thought that of that singular pair of friends, Wilson and House, the latter was the more attached to peace and favourable to neutrality. In point of fact, the opposite was the case. But my mistake was excusable, as I dealt almost exclusively with House, with whom I was on friendly terms and who gave me a great deal of detailed information. As I can now verify, House always loyally represented the President's views to me, and not his own. Even when he was not in agreement with Wilson, he worked entirely in the sense desired by the President. In this way he was really Wilson's *alter ego*, who neither could nor would offer opinions of his own. Audiences with the President, when they were obtainable at all, proceeded on the lines that the visitor put forward his suggestions, upon which Wilson delivered a more or less detailed exposition of his own views. Then the audience was at an end, unless the visitor was very persistent, in which case he did not fail to forfeit the President's favour, who would in the end hand him over to House.

In his political testament Wilson has properly sacrificed the imperialistic mania of France, and in his last public speech he

stated that France, by her invasion of the Ruhr, had reduced the Versailles Treaty to a scrap of paper. These observations of a man near to death should alone be enough to mitigate the verdict that will be passed on him in Germany so long as it is there generally held that Wilson betrayed us on two occasions, the first time when he offered us his mediation for peace in 1916, and secondly when he guaranteed the Fourteen Points in 1918.

As regards the first instance, there can be no question of a betrayal, as we did not accept his offer. No one is in a position to say what would have happened if we had. That is the great, unfathomable mystery of world history and of every private life—‘What would have happened if?’ I have in any case stated above what in all human probability would have been the consequence—namely, the salvation of Germany’s position in the world, and the avoidance of the misery in which Europe is now plunged. It is also rather significant that the American Ambassador in London, to whom a memorial has been erected there in recognition of his pro-Entente sympathies, took the same view, and he fell out with Wilson because he so sharply criticised the latter’s proposals for mediation. In any event the fact remains that President Wilson offered his services which we ought to have accepted because there was no other way of preventing the entry of the United States into the war.

The second is more grave, since it is admitted in Wilson’s book, as edited by Baker, that the Versailles Peace represented the breach of an engagement the European States having solemnly pledged themselves before the armistice to accept the President’s principles. The question can only be whether Wilson is to be held guilty of the *dolus* that would stamp him as a betrayer. The evidence available is such as to enable us to deny this completely. It goes to show that Wilson was led to establish a peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points and up to the time of his first return to America he was more or less successful in his struggle against French policy. But during

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Wilson's absence his work had been undermined by diplomatic intrigues, and, moreover, he realised in Washington that he had no firm support at home. In the meantime the President became convinced that he must effect a compromise with French policy. In the middle of the struggle for this compromise Wilson broke down physically, and his capacity for resistance gave way.

However, in some very important points, as for instance in the question of the Rhineland, he successfully opposed the French aspirations, a fact that enabled Stresemann to save this territory from foreign domination. Without Wilson's intervention the Great Powers at Versailles would have deprived us of the Rhine and the Saar. And if the Saar territory is German to-day, we owe that entirely to Wilson. In judging the President's policy at that time, it is essential to remember that he laid chief stress on the creation of the League of Nations, which should make all good later on. His place in world history will mainly depend on whether the League remains a living memorial to Wilson's activity, or is to be merely a brief episode. The President's ignorance of Europe was of course greatly to his disadvantage. Such treaties of peace as Abraham Lincoln achieved, and at which Wilson aimed, are indeed feasible in America, "where the spirit of man is not hampered by vain memories and futile strife." But in ancient Europe the hatred of centuries still lives. A just observer must, however, admit that the subsequent course of events would probably have been different if the President had secured the entrance of America into the League and the speedy admission of Germany. Unfortunately it happened otherwise. The League, like the continent of Europe, came under French hegemony, and therewith disappeared for a while the hope of reconciliation and understanding among the nations.

The charge that Wilson purposely betrayed us over the Fourteen Points acquired greater prominence from the fact that

a legend has been fostered in Germany to the effect that we laid down our weapons in reliance on the Fourteen Points. This legend is a flat falsification of history, as everyone knows who then took any part in the negotiations. We had to lay down our arms because the Supreme Army Command insisted that we should do so, in order to avoid a catastrophe, and then we invoked Wilson's help, with an appeal to the Fourteen Points. Whether it was very sensible to turn to the President whom we had so savagely abused two years before is another question. As it happened, however, his intervention was of advantage to us, for we thus acquired a moral right. The Peace of Versailles thus became the breach of an undertaking when it would otherwise have merely been the consequence of our military defeat.

Broadly speaking, therefore, Wilson was an idealist, who desired the best, but could not achieve his end because he was lacking in the necessary force of statesmanship. Nature had equipped him with brilliant gifts, but they were not the gifts called for by his position at that time, and were rendered even more ineffective by the President's incapacity for personal negotiation. This is the explanation of Wilson's failure at Versailles, and lies behind his friendship with House whom he got to negotiate for him as often as was practicable. On matters of foreign policy the President was too thoughtful and too slow in decision. Added to the rest was his overweening self-confidence and his dislike of allowing subordinates to work on his behalf. No doubt the course of world history would have been quite different if Wilson, in the year 1916 had made us his offer of mediation one month sooner. He would, also have achieved much more at Versailles if he had remained at home and hurled his lightnings from Olympus. The President's imperviousness to argument would not have been so obvious if another had been allowed to conduct the negotiations. Wilson's weakness was indeed his dogmatism that instinctively refused outside advice and outside help. Anyone who like myself had to contend with

him for years together, to reduce the disaster to my country to the unavoidable minimum, must to-day recognise as he looks back that his adversary was an honourable man, who did as much harm to his own reputation as to the world, when he missed the opportunity of inaugurating a nobler epoch. It has often been maintained, especially by Page, that I exercised a very strong influence on the President. This allegation is not true. It is equally a matter of indifference whether the President trusted me or not. The historic truth is simply that we went a part of the way together, because we both had *one single* aim, which was to keep the United States out of the war. What happened later was a *cura posterior*.

Unluckily for the world we did not achieve our aim. The war lasted two years more, and did not end until Europe was plunged in ruin.

It was naturally to be expected that public opinion in the United States would be overwhelmingly on the side of the Entente. This was indeed the case, to an unexpected extent, as a result of the violation of Belgian neutrality. The violence of the expressions used by the anti-German party evoked lively retaliation on the part of those who demanded that the United States should remain strictly neutral. The adherents of the latter party were always known in America as pro-Germans, although even the German-Americans asked for no more than unconditional neutrality. This was also the aim of German policy through its representatives in America. We never hoped for more. The waves of excitement rose so high that even the private relations of the adherents to the two parties suffered. On August 19th the President took occasion to issue a proclamation to the American people, which claims special interest because it sets out in definite form the policy that he pursued with consistent steadfastness until the entry of the United States into the war. In this proclamation the following passage occurs:

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"Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned." And further "Such divisions among us would be fatal to our peace of mind, and might seriously stand in the way of the proper performance of our duty as the one great nation at peace, the one people holding itself ready to play a part of impartial mediation, and speak the counsels of peace and accommodation, not as a partisan but as a friend."

The policy outlined in these extracts from Wilson's proclamation met with the approval of the overwhelming majority of the American nation, for even among the partisans of the Entente there was only a small minority that wanted the United States to take an active part in the war. Apart from the fact that the traditional policy of America seemed to forbid such interference in European affairs, it lay in the interest of the United States to play the part of *arbiter mundi* with strength undiminished, when the States of old Europe, weary of their mutual laceration, at last showed some desire for peace. America naturally, was anxious that neither of the belligerents should emerge from the struggle in a position of predominance. Consequently there is a certain truth in the contention, often to be met with in Germany, that the United States would in any case have joined in the war, to prevent the so-called German peace. The question merely is whether such a peace was ever possible in the face of our enemies superiority. If we had won the first battle of the Marne, and had then been ready to restore Belgium as well as to conclude a moderate peace in general there seems good reason to think that we could have come to an understanding with England. After the loss of the Marne battle a German peace was out of the question. The possibility of such a peace never again existed. On that account German policy, pursued the analogy of the Seven Years War should have driven us to a peace on the basis of the *status quo*. As at the time Frederick

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the Great defended the newly won position of Prussia as a Great Power against overwhelming superiority, we under similar circumstances were fighting for the maintenance of Germany's position in the world. The German people honestly believed that they were fighting a defensive war; and our policy should have been directed accordingly. If we could have obtained a peace like that of Hubertusburg, Germany would have won the war, though it is constantly contended that such a peace was outside the bounds of possibility.

I fought for it in America uninterruptedly for two and a half years, and I am to-day, as I was then, firmly convinced that if we had fallen in with the policy of the United States we could have obtained a peace that met the needs of the German people, if those at home who had the same end in view had been able to get their way.

The controversial question of a "German" peace as opposed to a peace of understanding must here be touched upon, as without it an account of my struggle in the United States is not possible. In August 1914 Wilson made his first offer of mediation. In September of the same year he repeated his efforts, with my support. As a result, the American Government thought it necessary thenceforward to adopt an attitude of greater reserve. However, before the close of the winter 1914-15 Wilson sent his confidential friend House to London, Paris and Berlin to ascertain in semi-official fashion whether there were any possibilities of peace. In the meantime, owing to the trade in arms and munitions, the feeling in Germany had turned sharply against the United States. This question was in fact an awkward one for us, as we had no basis in international law. The provision of the Hague Convention which permitted such trade was accepted at the second Hague Conference on our own proposal. However, it is understandable that the inevitably one-sided support of our enemies by the rapidly growing American war industry should produce a strong sense of indignation in Germany. As a result

we became involved in a controversy with the American Government similar to that with England during the war of 1870-71. Such being the case, House went back to America having achieved nothing, though he had established useful personal contacts. But he was not discouraged from further efforts by his first and unsuccessful mission, and up to the last he remained the warmest supporter of American mediation. After his return, House always maintained a friendly and confidential relation with me, which would have served to facilitate such negotiations.

The risk that the United States might join in the war was for the first time brought within the bounds of possibility by the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*. The deaths of over a hundred Americans, and among them many women and children produced an agitation in the United States of which even to-day, there is no real conception in Germany. In the first days after the fateful event President Wilson himself seemed to have under-estimated the prevailing indignation; otherwise he would probably not have taken up the attitude he did in his famous speech. On May 10th, 1915, at Philadelphia, he testified to his pacific sentiments and said 'The example of America must be a special example, the example of America must be the example not merely of peace because it will not fight, but of peace because peace is the healing and elevating influence of the world, and strife is not. There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right.' This speech increased the outburst of indignation throughout the country. Too proud to fight became the taunt of abuse flung by the Jingo and Entente party against Wilson. Almost unanimously public opinion demanded the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany. Under the pressure of this primitive emotion the President thought it necessary to offer a further and official interpretation of what he had said. On May 13th he sent the first well known *Just y wird di Welt* [114]

Berlin. In Germany the U-boat war was regarded as a justifiable reprisal against the English blockade. On the other hand, it was maintained in the United States that the neutrals—apart from the case of an effective blockade—were justified in travelling where they pleased, without risk to their lives, while the German U-boats were only authorised to hold up merchant ships for the purpose of search. The American demand made the U-boat war impossible, which was, in fact, the intention of the Union Government. The conflict between the two points of view seemed unbridgeable, and would inevitably have led, in the persistent excitement, to the breach of diplomatic relations, unless it were possible to gain time, during which the waves of indignation might die down. Telegraphic communication between the German Government and the Washington Embassy could only be established by devious ways and was thus extraordinarily slow. I had to take decisions on my own responsibility and conduct business with rapidity. It was immediately clear to me that a breach of diplomatic relations would mean war. In Washington we were engaged in a lively struggle with enemy propaganda, the sole object of which was to draw the United States into the war and thus produce a decision. Since the *Lusitania* incident the diplomatic conflict between the Entente and ourselves turned almost exclusively on this point. If the relations between the German and the American Governments were broken off, we should be left helpless and unsupported in the United States against the enemy propaganda. The main point therefore was to preserve diplomatic relations under all circumstances. In any case, however, my efforts at that time were reasonable, in case the breach could be ultimately avoided. Now, when the issue is known to us, it may be urged that it would have been better if the United States had entered the war at that time. The final catastrophe would then have come earlier, and have fallen upon the German people, when it was not yet demoralised and shattered by a four years' war and

blockade. At that time I had a well founded hope of being able to bring about a peace through the mediation of America, and I accordingly wanted to gain time at any cost. Without awaiting instructions from Berlin I exercised my privileges as Ambassador and asked for an audience of the President. As I discovered later, on the very day of my visit to the President all preparations had been made for a breach of relations and the consequent war. I had a long private interview with the President, whom I found much shaken and most heartily anxious to avoid war. We were both agreed that time must be gained, and this unanimity led to the application of a palliative. We took our stand on the fact that the existing isolation of Germany had produced an atmosphere of misunderstanding between us and the United States. Such being the case, it was to be assumed that if a personal and oral contact could be established, this would lead to a relaxation of tension. So, at my suggestion, we agreed that I should send Reg Ratgeb, Meyer Gerhard who had travelled with Dernburg to America and was there working for our Red Cross, to Germany forthwith so that he might make an oral report to our Government. Wilson promised to take no irremediable steps until the results of the Meyer Gerhard mission could be seen. In the meantime the exchange of sharp toned Notes between Washington and Berlin went on, without leading to any understanding. But the excitement in the United States gradually died down, and the first crisis was overcome.

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American differences with England over the latter's naval warfare, and with Austria Hungary over the torpedoing of the *Ancona*, delayed the further negotiations over the *Lusitania* case. These began in December and were carried on, orally and confidentially, between Lansing and myself. Unfortunately it was not possible to keep them confidential in Washington, especially as the conversations went on for weeks. The State Department was constantly beset by journalists, who published a medley of truth and fiction about each of my visits. The American Government took the view that a reprisal *per se* represented an act that went beyond what was permitted by international law, and that therefore our defence of the sinking of the *Lusitania* as a reprisal involved an admission of illegality. The German Government refused to admit the unlawfulness of the U boat warfare within the war zones.

The word illegal, therefore, produced a third crisis which came near to involving a breach of relations. In the end Lansing and I succeeded in finding a formula that satisfied both Governments. I gave a written declaration that reprisals were admissible but that they were not to affect neutrals, and that the German Government was ready to provide satisfaction and compensation in such cases. The American Government was to acknowledge the receipt of this document and state that its contentions had thereby been met. But fate had destined me for the part of Sisyphus in Washington. The personal negotiations regarding the *Lusitania* had just come to an end when the German Government declared the so-called 'intensified U boat war' or

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In the meantime House had gone to Europe for the second time. I had announced his visit in Berlin, and made every preparation for him to meet the more influential political personalities. When he came back to America he told me that, even now, the time for an American offer of mediation had not yet come. He had had the opportunity of putting forward his views in London, Paris and Berlin, and he had found the strongest opposition in Paris. In Berlin, on the other hand, he had met with a readiness, in principle, to agree to mediation by Wilson at the appropriate time. At the President's desire, after House's second journey, I dealt exclusively with the latter on the question of peace. Hence it was possible to conduct the conversations in complete secrecy. House lived in New York, where I was able to visit his private house unobserved, while the State Department, as already mentioned, was always beset by journalists.

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his position, and expressed his wish to visit headquarters and enlighten the Kaiser personally regarding the American point of view. On May 1st Gerard was received by the Kaiser in the presence of the Chancellor, on which occasion he received the above-mentioned assurance. In order to make quite certain, I telegraphed to Berlin to enquire whether the news from Gerard was true. The answer was that we had not got quite so far, as there were difficulties of internal politics to overcome, but that I should proceed as before, and encourage Wilson to take in hand the work of peace. I was even sent a memorandum written by the Emperor himself, which was to remind Gerard of his conversations with the Kaiser. When, on that occasion, House discussed with me the German reservation of May 4th, he said that the President could not force England to observe international law, as he had not the power to do so. England would not give in without war, and war against England was out of the question, because there was no feeling in its favour in the United States. On the other hand, Wilson had the power to inaugurate peace, and he would do so as soon as the time was ripe. Such a neutral attitude as was in America designated as pro-German could only be brought into play if the feeling towards Germany grew more friendly. There must therefore be a political standstill during which there should be no mention of Germany. I agreed with House in this, and had no further doubt that an offer of mediation would take place about September. After we had given way in the matter of the U-boat question, so as to avoid war with the United States, I took it as certain that we should not deliberately provoke war later on, as the situation could not be regarded in any other light, by the terms of the American ultimatum of April 18th, 1916.

With the high summer a period of political standstill did in fact ensue, and I did not see House again until the beginning of September, when I visited him in the country. On that occasion he considered a postponement of the mediation offer

unavoidable; in the latter, I recommended that there should be no exchange of Notes between the two Governments, so that our compliance might not be couched in too humiliating a form. Unfortunately the Berlin Government began by sending a Note in which the deed was denied. This only made matters considerably worse, because the denial could not be maintained. The result was the extremely sharp American Note of April 18th, which almost amounted to an ultimatum. The closing passage ran as follows. 'Unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of warfare against passenger and freight carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the Government of the German Empire altogether.'

On May 4th came the German reply, in which the fourth crisis was averted by the German Government giving way. The U boat war was reduced to the form of cruiser warfare as recognised by international law. But the German Government reserved a free hand in case the United States did not succeed in inducing England to accommodate her sea warfare to the provisions of international law. This reservation was not recognised by the American Government, though this did not affect the peaceful results of the interchange of Notes.

In connection with the *Sussex* certain progress was made on the Peace question. When I saw House for the first time after the crisis had been overcome he told me that a telegram had come in from the American Ambassador in Berlin to the effect that the German Government was now ready to accept American mediation. The position was as follows. Gerard was not *persona grata* in Berlin on account of his hostile attitude to Germany. He also felt offended because the most important negotiations were carried on partly in Washington and partly through House in Berlin. On the account the *Arthur* <sup>1878</sup> wished to use the opportunity of the *Sussex* case to establish

his position, and expressed his wish to visit headquarters and enlighten the Kaiser personally regarding the American point of view. On May 1st Gerard was received by the Kaiser in the presence of the Chancellor, on which occasion he received the above-mentioned assurance. In order to make quite certain, I telegraphed to Berlin to enquire whether the news from Gerard was true. The answer was that we had not got quite so far, as there were difficulties of internal politics to overcome, but that I should proceed as before, and encourage Wilson to take in hand the work of peace. I was even sent a memorandum written by the Emperor himself, which was to remind Gerard of his conversations with the Kaiser. When, on that occasion, House discussed with me the German reservation of May 4th, he said that the President could not force England to observe international law, as he had not the power to do so. England would not give in without war, and war against England was out of the question, because there was no feeling in its favour in the United States. On the other hand, Wilson had the power to inaugurate peace, and he would do so as soon as the time was ripe. Such a neutral attitude as was in America designated as pro-German could only be brought into play if the feeling towards Germany grew more friendly. There must therefore be a political standstill during which there should be no mention of Germany. I agreed with House in this, and had no further doubt that an offer of mediation would take place about September. After we had given way in the matter of the U-boat question, so as to avoid war with the United States, I took it as certain that we should not deliberately provoke war later on, as the situation could not be regarded in any other light, by the terms of the American ultimatum of April 18th, 1916.

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as absolutely necessary, because the Entente were very hopeful of victory as the result of Rumania having come into the war Wilson would therefore have to wait until after the Presidential election in order not to expose himself to a rebuff on the part of the Entente. The answer would certainly have been a refusal, as the Entente were certain of victory, and Wilson's position, as a doubtful candidate for the Presidency, had become too weak. But in the meantime the Berlin Government grew impatient. In September and October I received instructions to do all I could to hasten an offer of mediation. My reply was that this could be expected in the middle of November, provided that Wilson was again elected. But the urgency of the messages from Berlin provided the occasion for repeated interviews with House as to the methods of mediation. According to my instructions the German Government was prepared to accept Wilson's League of Nations programme, which contained provisions for disarmament and obligatory arbitration for the avoidance of future wars. Furthermore, we expressly declared that we did not propose to annex Belgium. On the other hand the Berlin Government desired that the territorial questions should be settled by direct negotiations between the belligerent Powers. On this point the President agreed. His view was that the United States had no interest in the details of the territorial settlement, but that it was of fundamental importance to avoid further wars and secure the Freedom of the Seas. Wilson was only willing to intervene in so far as he was sure of the support of American public opinion. In these conversations with House there was no suggestion of the surrender of any German territory. The subject of our discussion was always a true Peace of understanding in which Germany should preserve her position in the world with her rights undiminished.

After a hard struggle Wilson was again elected President. The pacific influences of the United States had won the day as the campaign was mainly conducted under the slogan that

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Wilson had kept the country out of the war. Moreover, his election address was entirely neutral. Immediately after the elections were over, about the middle of November, the President wrote the Note offering mediation, but unfortunately he kept it in his writing-table drawer, because just at that moment a wave of anti-German feeling was sweeping the country as a result of the Belgian deportations. Soon afterwards I received a fresh enquiry as to when the American offer of mediation might be expected. This enquiry was occasioned by the remark that other plans were now maturing. After communicating with House I replied that Wilson would send his Note before Christmas. Then followed a further and comprehensive telegram to the effect that the German Government could not wait so long, and would make an offer of peace on its own behalf. As House told me, the President was disappointed at this development. But he was not to be turned from his purpose, and on December 18th he sent off the long-prepared Note. Our peace offer, being interpreted as a sign of weakness, had made the task of American mediation more difficult. None the less, the Wilson Note would further our plans, and would therefore be generally regarded in America as pro-German. It was indeed on that account that it produced no small sensation. As the Note was considered rather obscure and tentative in its positive proposals, I went to see Lansing to ask him what actual procedure was in the President's mind. He told me that the American Government hoped to serve as a "Clearing House." If both belligerent parties would communicate their conditions, it might be possible to reach agreement on a middle course. When I reported this to Berlin, I received the reply that the idea of a "Clearing House" was not feasible owing to the prevailing atmosphere in Germany. The German Government did not desire to make known its conditions until the actual conference.

Accordingly, the answer to the Wilson Note, issued with surprising promptitude in Berlin on December 26th, was a





ADDRESSING A GERMAN CLUB AT BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 1916

all was thereby lost. The choice for the German Government lay between a peace of understanding through American mediation and the U boat war, involving war with the United States, which must inevitably bring us to defeat.

Only one psychological moment need be touched on here. Wilson's personal hostility to Germany later on during the war is solely to be explained by our refusal of his peace mediation. As he viewed the state of affairs, everything that Entente propaganda had said about us must be absolutely true, since we should otherwise have chosen the proffered peace of understanding, and not the U boat war. A similar change came about in Wilson's attitude towards the Allies too, when they refused his intervention. As a result, the President became really neutral for the first time about the end of 1916, because he thought he had discovered that the Allies were no better than the Germans after all, and therefore no longer deserved any preference.

My home coming from America and my subsequent experience in Germany I have already described in my first book. It would, however, be no mere repetition to state here that my candidature as Chancellor was supported by the Reichstag, and that I was proposed to the Kaiser as Bethmann's successor by both Bethmann himself and Valentin. His Majesty went so far as to declare himself prepared to appoint me, provided the generals agreed, which of course they did not do, as since my service in America I had acquired the reputation of desiring to make peace and to reform the Reich. I had already negotiated with the Social Democrats on the subject of entering the Government. Scheidemann and Wolfgang Heine had visited me several times. From those conversations I particularly remember that Heine said to me that I should not include him or any other academically educated Social Democrat in the Government, but working men like Ebert, as the Academics too quickly lost their following within the party. Such ideas were only too clearly realised a year

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American differences with England over the latter's naval warfare, and with Austria Hungary over the torpedoing of the *Ancona*, delayed the further negotiations over the *Lusitania* case. These began in December and were carried on, orally and confidentially, between Lansing and myself. Unfortunately it was not possible to keep them confidential in Washington, especially as the conversations went on for weeks. The State Department was constantly beset by journalists, who published a medley of truth and fiction about each of my visits. The American Government took the view that a reprisal *per se* represented an act that went beyond what was permitted by international law, and that therefore our defence of the sinking of the *Lusitania* as a reprisal involved an admission of illegality. The German Government refused to admit the unlawfulness of the U boat warfare within the war zones.

The word 'illegal,' therefore, produced a third crisis, which came near to involving a breach of relations. In the end Lansing and I succeeded in finding a formula that satisfied both Governments. I gave a written declaration that reprisals were admissible but that they were not to affect neutrals, and that the German Government was ready to provide satisfaction and compensation in such cases. The American Government was to acknowledge the receipt of this document and state that its contentions had thereby been met. But fate had destined me for the part of Sisyphus in Washington. The personal negotiations regarding the *Lusitania* had just come to an end when the German Government declared the so-called intensified U boat war on

his position, and expressed his wish to visit headquarters and enlighten the Kaiser personally regarding the American point of view. On May 1st Gerard was received by the Kaiser in the presence of the Chancellor, on which occasion he received the above-mentioned assurance. In order to make quite certain, I telegraphed to Berlin to enquire whether the news from Gerard was true. The answer was that we had not got quite so far, as there were difficulties of internal politics to overcome, but that I should proceed as before, and encourage Wilson to take in hand the work of peace. I was even sent a memorandum written by the Emperor himself, which was to remind Gerard of his conversations with the Kaiser. When, on that occasion, House discussed with me the German reservation of May 4th, he said that the President could not force England to observe international law, as he had not the power to do so. England would not give in without war, and war against England was out of the question, because there was no feeling in its favour in the United States. On the other hand, Wilson had the power to inaugurate peace, and he would do so as soon as the time was ripe. Such a neutral attitude as was in America designated as pro-German could only be brought into play if the feeling towards Germany grew more friendly. There must therefore be a political standstill during which there should be no mention of Germany. I agreed with House in this, and had no further doubt that an offer of mediation would take place about September. After we had given way in the matter of the U-boat question, so as to avoid war with the United States, I took it as certain that we should not deliberately provoke war later on, as the situation could not be regarded in any other light, by the terms of the American ultimatum of April 18th, 1916.

With the high summer a period of political standstill did in fact ensue, and I did not see House again until the beginning of September, when I visited him in the country. On that occasion he considered a postponement of the mediation offer

unavoidable; in the latter, I recommended that there should be no exchange of Notes between the two Governments, so that our compliance might not be couched in too humiliating a form. Unfortunately the Berlin Government began by sending a Note in which the deed was denied. This only made matters considerably worse, because the denial could not be maintained. The result was the extremely sharp American Note of April 18th, which almost amounted to an ultimatum. The closing passage ran as follows. "Unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of warfare against passenger and freight carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the Government of the German Empire altogether."

On May 4th came the German reply, in which the fourth crisis was averted by the German Government giving way. The U boat war was reduced to the form of cruiser warfare as recognised by international law. But the German Government reserved a free hand in case the United States did not succeed in inducing England to accommodate her sea warfare to the provisions of international law. This reservation was not recognised by the American Government, though this did not affect the peaceful results of the interchange of Notes.

In connection with the *Sussex* certain progress was made on the Peace question. When I saw House for the first time after the crisis had been overcome, he told me that a telegram had come in from the American Ambassador in Berlin to the effect that the German Government was now ready to accept American mediation. The position was as follows: Gerard was not *persona grata* in Berlin on account of his hostile attitude to Germany. He also felt offended because the most important negotiations were carried on partly in Washington and partly through House in Berlin. On that account the Ambassador wished to use the opportunity of the *Sussex* case to establish

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friendly intimation of our refusal to name our peace conditions. The German Government described the conference it had proposed as the proper way to a peace. Before the Investigation Committee of the National Assembly Bethmann Hollweg explained that the purpose of this policy was to enable the Imperial Government to keep two irons in the fire. Both peace overtures were to be pursued, and one or the other of them brought to an issue according as events might determine. After the German peace overture had come to nothing, the President on January 18th received an answering Note from the Entente containing conditions that were quite unacceptable to us. Wilson and House were convinced that the Entente were ready for an arranged peace, and that the conditions in question were bluff. I too believe that the Entente were well aware of the political situation in Germany, and that they meant to alarm us by the statement of such conditions and thus force us to declare unrestricted U boat warfare. The Entente had but one object and that was to draw the United States into the war. In any case, the negative answer returned by the Entente to our Government had already sufficed for this purpose, for the definite decision to declare unrestricted U boat warfare was taken on January 9th. I received the news on the 19th with the injunction to inform the American Government that the unlimited U boat war would begin on February 1st. After all that had passed I could only regard this news as a declaration of war against the United States, and moreover such as put us in the wrong, since it stultified Wilson's efforts in the direction of peace, which had been made with our concurrence. I did all I could to get the Berlin decision withdrawn, or at least postponed. The President came to my help in so far as he directed a personal message to the Senate on January 1st, in which he enlarged at length upon his programme of peace without victory. Next day I received a telegram from House inviting me to call upon him in New York. He then read me an instruction from the President to

the effect that Wilson now formally offered us his mediation with a view to securing a negotiated peace. I at once sent a telegram to Berlin with the news, assuming that the previous decision could no longer stand. On this occasion I repeated my often expressed view that we should obtain much better conditions through the mediation of the United States than after America had joined in the war. But I received the reply that any postponement of unrestricted U-boat war was impossible on technical grounds. With this, as the Chancellor said, "the Rubicon was crossed." Immediately after the communication on the U-boat war, the American Government broke off relations with ours, and that, as I have already made clear, meant war. The fact that I was able to inform the President confidentially of our peace conditions at the same time as the declaration of unlimited U-boat war could not alter the position that had existed since the American ultimatum of April 8th, 1916.

In the above narrative I have once more attempted to describe, as briefly and objectively as possible, my struggle to prevent the entry of the United States into the war. The psychological moments that embittered the atmosphere on one side or the other I have only incidentally mentioned. Under this heading come—propaganda; the vastly exaggerated so-called German conspiracies in the United States connected with munition trade; the Berlin dinner in honour of Ambassador Gerard; and the Mexico despatch. All these matters were, as propaganda, successfully exploited against us; but they did not precipitate the war, as can be chronologically proved. The "propaganda" and the "conspiracies" ended with the return of Dernburg, Papen, and Boy-Ed, that is to say before the close of 1915. Thenceforward, until the catastrophe, for more than a year I treated with the American Government on terms of confidence. Whatever may be thought about the other matters, they were not used for propaganda until the breach had taken place and

all was thereby lost. The choice for the German Government lay between a peace of understanding through American mediation and the U boat war, involving war with the United States, which must inevitably bring us to defeat.

Only one psychological moment need be touched on here. Wilson's personal hostility to Germany later on during the war is solely to be explained by our refusal of his peace mediation. As he viewed the state of affairs, everything that Entente propaganda had said about us must be absolutely true, since we should otherwise have chosen the proffered peace of understanding, and not the U boat war. A similar change came about in Wilson's attitude towards the Allies too, when they refused his intervention. As a result, the President became really neutral for the first time about the end of 1916 because he thought he had discovered that 'the Allies were no better than the Germans after all, and therefore no longer deserved any preference.'

My home coming from America and my subsequent experience in Germany I have already described in my first book. It would, however, be no mere repetition to state here that my candidature as Chancellor was supported by the Reichstag, and that I was proposed to the Kaiser as Bethmann's successor by both Bethmann himself and Valentin. His Majesty went so far as to declare himself prepared to appoint me, provided the generals agreed, which of course they did not do, as since my service in America I had acquired the reputation of desiring to make peace and to reform the Reich. I had already negotiated with the Social Democrats on the subject of entering the Government. Scheidemann and Wolfgang Heine had visited me several times. From those conversations I particularly remember that Heine said to me that I should not include him or any other academically educated Social Democrat in the Government, but working men like Ebert, as the Academics too quickly lost their following within the party. Such ideas were only too clearly realized a year



ADDRESSING A GERMAN CLUB AT BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 1916



later when it was too late to save anything. At that time, in 1917, the crisis was ended, after the elimination of Bulow, who would have liked me as Secretary of State, by Michaelis becoming Chancellor, Kuhlmann Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministry, and I Ambassador at Constantinople—a post which I only accepted because both Michaelis and Kuhlmann had assured me that they intended to make peace, and I was to have the far from agreeable task of preparing the Turks for the prospect. As I look back to-day, I was then completely aware that we could no longer obtain a good peace, as might have been possible six months previously. Before the United States had entered the war I would have gladly taken over the direction of German foreign policy and secured for my country and for the world a peace by negotiation and an opportunity for reconstruction. But with America as our enemy the task was almost insoluble. However, as I look back, I must still confess that much could have been saved, even in 1917, if we had put the helm of home policy energetically over to the Left, made unexceptionable treaties of peace at Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, strengthened the Turkish and Bulgarian fronts, and then, relying on our as yet intact army in the West, negotiated with the enemy. Like Hannibal against Italy, and Napoleon against Russia, who entered upon great undertakings with inadequate resources, and were therefore, after brilliant victories, defeated in the end, our war heroes tried to prevail upon fortune by an offensive which we had no longer the force to support. Of the great captains of history only two escaped a similar fate—Cæsar and Frederick the Great, and that because they were not exclusively soldiers, but in an even higher degree, statesmen. In the long run, a war can only be won in the political sphere. It was the failure to recognise this profound historic truth that brought us down. It is only fair to emphasise that the Foreign Ministry consistently tried to avoid that error. But it was no use; the military and naval authorities always had the decisive word.

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

The diplomats found themselves out in the cold if they did not come into line, as, for instance, Jagow. I have often wondered whether we should have won the wars of 1866 and 1870 if Bismarck had not with iron energy insisted that political leadership must be reserved for the statesman.

When I was in Berlin at that time I was in constant touch with my old friend Lichnowsky, who lived there, and has been so unjustly ostracised. He himself admitted that it was "stupid to have written down his views on pre war policy during the war, and all the more so to have let the document out of his hands. He had to suffer bitterly for that stupidity, but the following letter will show how deeply he was troubled over our unhappy fatherland.

*'Kuchelna, Upper Silesia'*

*"June 12th, 1917"*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"

"I have often thought over our last talks, and feel glad that I agreed with you in all essentials.

"Only, I do not think, as matters stand at present, that a democratisation of the Government in the parliamentary sense is feasible, and still less that this, even could it be brought about, would lead to an acceptable peace, by which I mean one without annexations or indemnities. Our enemies would demand indemnities and the return of Alsace Lorraine, even from the new regime, and Wilson's latest manifesto confirms me in this view.

I see only one hope though indeed it is but small. If we could build golden bridges to the Russians whose war weariness is increasing day by day, over the Polish and Serbian questions it would perhaps be conceivable that they would refuse to go on, and that our enemies might be brought to realise that their hopes of victory were vain. This programme of course involves

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a strong pressure on Austria, but the desire for peace in the country will make them ready to listen. Even so the Turks must be induced to make concessions on the Armenian and Dardanelles questions. It should not be a very serious sacrifice for us to abandon the scheme of a Polish State and our annexations in the East.

"If this does not succeed, and if the Entente succeed in getting the Russians on the move and harnessing them afresh to the chariot of war, I can see nothing but a long war ahead of us, and an evil end to it.

"Perhaps you may have occasion to exert your influence in this sense? . . .

"Your old friend,

"LICHNOWSKY."

All efforts were in vain and the unhappy German people had to drain the cup of misery to the dregs.

At the close of the chapter on my period of service in America let me quote a few letters connected with my first book, and the questions of the time. They are all from well-known persons: Jagow, the only man in Berlin who consistently upheld the same policy as I did in Washington; Colonel House; the Austro-Hungarian Minister, Czernin; and finally Hanfstangel, who is now Hitler's Press Director, and in those days lived in America.

"Klein-Oels, Silesia.

"10.IV.19.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"Our late exchange of reminiscences has brought all sorts of ideas back into my mind. More especially your mention of the Imperial memorandum which you were to communicate to Wilson without naming the author. Perhaps it would have been better advised, so as to give the document more credit, to ha

a mistake, and was anxious that the real facts should be made clear to Wilson. I have always regarded Wiegand as reliable and well intentioned. He would also be rather a suitable intermediary, as it was through him, or rather through an interview which Tirpitz gave him, that the U boat question was first flung upon the world. Please think over the matter, which must, of course, remain quite *between ourselves*

"However, I shall not be coming back to Berlin before a fortnight's time and perhaps the matter is urgent.

"Against this outcry about Guilt both without and within something must be done, and *meo voto* far too little has been done hitherto. I am really not thinking of personal annoyances. A man whom you also would regard as an unprejudiced and able critic, wrote to me weeks ago in this sense, I mean Monts. He has himself already written several articles on the subject. But he says that an individual cannot do much, and warns me that *younger forces must be mobilised in Berlin*. But what am I to do?

' The collapse of the army, the forced flight into Holland, are quite enough blots on our history. But if we now appear at the conference table with the air of sinners, or even with a demeanour that might in any way suggest that we admitted the charge of Guilt, it will be a permanent stain on our records that posterity will not understand. Our people too, when they have overcome their present hysterical and morbid condition, will feel this also. They will react against it, and bitterly upbraid their leaders of to-day. It may be that, for the moment, tactical reasons may make this attitude seem advantageous. But *à la longue* and viewed dispassionately, I believe it to be an irreparable mistake which will be heavily avenged both within and without. The analogy may be as inadequate as are most analogies, but it was with a very different air that Talleyrand made his appearance at the Congress of Vienna. And it can hardly be maintained that he failed.

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"This summer I read once more—to recall more vividly Anglo-German relations in their various phases—your father's Recollections: 'The Fight for Prussian Honour.' Yes, where is that honour now? Are we to close many hundred years of glorious history by subscribing to our enemies' false and brutal verdict by our own confession of guilt? No nation has ever done such a thing.

"With best regards, always yours, etc.,

"JAGOW."

*"Münster i.W. Sept. 2nd, 1919.*

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"Thank you very much for your kind note of the 25th. Wiegand did not send me the interview, although he promised he would do so. These past affairs have but little value in the face of the awful chaos left behind by the war. Will a cosmos arise out of it once more? Or is the hegemony of Europe played out? When one looks at the bankruptcy of almost all European States, one really feels to be looking down into a blazing crater. None the less we cannot and must not give up the hope of a better future. And for this, the elucidation of the past has its positive value. More especially is it important for the *dramatis personæ* to get the course of events properly established. The present flood of publicity is more calculated to darken than to clarify the true facts. For it is mostly controversy. Subjective views, often tendenciously heightened or deliberately distorted; and the worst of the brood seems to have been Tirpitz. A farrago of misrepresentation and suppression, and some of this sensation-mongering has got as far as America. Even in these publications the prevailing chaos finds expression.

"Events were so many, and they moved so fast, that my memory is often confused. Unfortunately I have only a few notes. I am all the more anxious to reconstruct matters as they really happened.

"You mention in your letter the last phase before the war with America. It is well enough known that I was always an enemy of the U boat war. I foresaw the consequences. The severe loss and damage to the neutrals that would drive them more or less on to the side of the enemy. Especially America. If the latter declared against us, there would be no longer any neutrality in the world. (The small curs counted for nothing at all.) What that meant we have just seen in the terms of the peace treaty. Unfortunately my influence was not enough. I was a stumbling block, and the sooner I was got out of the way the better. Bethmann allowed himself to be drawn on to slippery places. The Navy went quite systematically to work. First the little finger, then the whole hand. I did not believe in the final success of the war as waged by us, that is, not in a radical success that we could force upon the whole world. The superiority of the enemy was too great, the relation of forces too unequal.

I did my best to get round all incidents with America until Wilson, who had taken his stand on a peace platform, was elected, and could make his offer of mediation. Wilson was elected, but he waited too long before acting.

"When, as you remember, we sent Gerard on leave, I begged him to induce Wilson to take some step in the direction of peace. It was at a dinner at the Hotel Adlon, to which Hale had invited me and Gerard. Gerard then told me, with genuine American frankness, that Heckscher, among others was working for my dismissal, and that Bülow was also intriguing against me. That was indeed no revelation to me. A further attempt was that connected with the Wiegand interview. The idea of the general peace offer at the beginning of December was not, as Helfferich would like to represent it, conceived by him. It came from Burian. In the first place I had some misgivings about it, for various reasons, and, among others, because we were anticipating Wilson. But I soon convinced myself that the step

was a right one and made all the necessary preparations (it was not made known until shortly after my resignation, of course). The nation was in distress, morale was low and had to be raised by proving that it was not we who were responsible for the prolongation of the war and the necessity of further fighting. For I had really not for a moment believed that our enemies would accept our offer. . . . But if the enemy refused, the way for Wilson remained still open. Indeed, his task was made all the more easy, as it was proved that we were not the enemies of peace. An offer of mediation by Wilson could not be refused by any Power without running the risk of gravely offending that vain personage. But perhaps England had on that account been working against us in Washington. Wilson still held back, and here everything was heading for the catastrophe, or at least for the step that I regarded as such. The influence of Helfferich, who was now in favour of the U-boat war, also worked upon the Chancellor. (Hence his account of the affair.) At the end of November came my resignation; the Supreme Army Command had turned against me too. . . . But in the last resort I take the view that it was the influence of politicians such as Stresemann and Co. who, via Bauer and others, had worked against me. Spahn once said to me that I was regarded as the 'soul' of the resistance against unrestricted U-boat warfare. I asked the Chancellor to put the question of confidence. Whether he did put the matter in that way I have reason to doubt. He, too, wanted to let me go, as he was a prey to the illusion that Zimmermann would be a better *trait d'unon* between himself and various Deputies and Ludendorff. The spell did not last long. The form of my dismissal annoyed me, otherwise I was glad to retire. I foresaw—without conceit—that things could only go from bad to worse. The banquet to Gerard, the declaration of the U-boat war, and the Mexico despatch proved that my foreboding was correct. I merely watched events from a distance and was often positively bewildered at the lunacy

that they revealed. With Zimmermann the fanatical U boat warriors thought they had a free hand. He was in his heart always pro-U boat, that is, he always swam with the stream and with those who shouted loudest. On that account he was considered 'strong.' Whether he said that we should anticipate Wilson with our peace offer I don't know, but I think it very possible, especially as that peace offer (of which he was quite innocent, but it came within his administration) got him into serious trouble with the intransigents. Disaster took its course. Whether I would have had enough influence to stem it I don't know. The intention was that I should go in January instead of at the end of November. That W was then ready with a positive offer I did not learn until long afterwards. But no American peace was wanted! An utter misconception of the facts. For a peace such as our Hotspurs dreamed of had been no longer possible after the battle of the Marne. It would also have been a misfortune for Germany. The annexation of Belgium was in itself a folly, from the point of view of both home and foreign policy. Our eventual aims could only lie in the East. I insisted on this from the start, not without finding myself in conflict with almost our entire public opinion. Well, it's the other way round now. In my opinion we should have got quite a favourable peace through Wilson—though not, of course, at the expense of England, as those besotted gentry had conceived it.

I don't know if you have read my little work, and whether you noticed on page 91 a mysterious journey of Tyrrell's to Washington? It was given out that Tyrrell was on a visit to Spring Rice, but his purpose was really a political one. He himself said to a friend afterwards: 'If I had failed in my mission I should have damaged my career. Equally of Wilson. He was a man who could be used in certain circumstances. I travelled on a German ship and was on that account attacked

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by the English Press. Possibly to disguise the object of the journey? I learnt of the affair in the summer of '14, and have always thought that the matter at issue was America's 'benevolent neutrality' in certain circumstances. I did not think Wilson could go any further. . . .

"It is of a certain interest that a secret meeting was arranged between myself and Tyrrell in the spring of '14, and actually with Grey's approval. But it was put off, and then put off again—it seemed that T. could not come . . . and then the crisis intervened. . . .

"I will not, at any rate for the present, write anything about the war. The events are still too near to us, and I should have to touch on many things—controversies and conflicts at home—which for the time being could only do harm. But I do think it important that matters should be cleared up among those who took part in them. I am not surprised that you have refused an appointment as Minister. Under present conditions no profitable work is possible. *De facto*, the whole present régime is already bankrupt, and matters are in such a tangle that there is nothing to be done. And there are to be further upsets. At the expense of the fatherland. It is proposed to 'reform' the Foreign Ministry. As if that had been the trouble! Much, in fact, called for alteration. But these parliamentary wiseacres will utterly disorganise it.

"With best wishes, I am, yours, etc.,

"JAGOW."

"Münster i.W. 9.IX.1919.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTOREFF,—

"Many thanks for your letter of the 6th and the Wiegand interview.

"I saw the letter when I was in Berlin a few days ago. His wife had just come from America and said that Wilson was now the best hated man in the country. (But she mainly

represents the attitude of the German Americans.) Wiegand himself thought that ratification would follow, but with certain amendments I know too little of the situation in America, but I have a feeling that Wilson will get his way; the affront would otherwise be too great.

"Wiegand no longer writes for the *Sun*, but for *Hearst*. I too am in no doubt that we should have tried to make peace with Wilson's help. The declaration of unrestricted U boat war at that moment was a most fatal error.

You mention in your letter that Tyrrell had complained about the non publication of our agreement. But only the Portuguese agreement was ready, the Mesopotamian one was not complete. And the English insisted that the Portuguese agreement should only be published at the same time as the Windsor Treaty, which was well known to be in formal contradiction of the former. If we had published the Portuguese without the Mesopotamian agreement, there would have been an outcry here over perfide Albion, by which we were allowing ourselves to be led astray. All the Bassers and Stresemanns, the Heyde brandts, and a good many of the independents, would have cried out and the situation would only have deteriorated. If Lichnowsky had explained this properly to the English, who are well aware of the importance of public opinion, they would certainly have understood our hesitation. But L. only saw matters through his London spectacles, and his sole aim was to surprise the world with a prompt and personal success. Perhaps Tyrrell too, saw disaster approaching, and the influence of the Entente upon Grey increasing, and he hoped the publication of the agreement might give a turn to public opinion in our favour. For T had latterly come to support an understanding with Germany.

Always etc.,  
JACOB "

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"Münster i.W. 19th Sept., 1919.

"My DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I had begun Helfferich's second volume, but soon laid it aside as I had a great many other things to read. So I had not reached the passage to which you referred, and have just read it at your suggestion.

"Helfferich, so far as I know, made notes about everything; I unfortunately did not, and the individual ups and downs of the U-boat war—as well as those of the inner conflict with the Navy—are not very clearly before my mind. Nor is Helfferich's statement of 5.VIII.15. That the Foreign Ministry should not have supported the proposal seems to me doubtful at the very least. All my efforts were directed to guaranteeing the rights of neutrals during the U-boat war, and above all to avoiding any conflict with America. And when, on Feb. 14th, it was agreed that neutrals should be spared, I believe, without undue self-conceit, that I may claim a good part of the credit, by my influence on the Kaiser, and my vote at the general meeting (Naval representatives present) at H.M.'s headquarters at Bellevue. In any case, on the U-boat question I was the responsible official, and I dealt mainly with the Chancellor, and to a less extent with Helfferich. He always talks of 'his friends in the Ministry.' To whom he refers I do not rightly know, but I rather assume it to be Zimmermann.

"I am also disposed to think that the proposal was not brought to nought by want of support in the Foreign Ministry, but by the resistance of the Navy (and perhaps also by the Chancellor's constitutional inability to make up his mind), and above all by the *Arabic* incident on 19.8. But, as I said, I have no exact recollection of this phase.

"In Helfferich's book his efforts to put himself into the foreground are very noteworthy. *De facto*, his influence on the Chancellor and his contribution to general questions of policy did not become effective until a later phase in 1916, when he was

already Secretary of State for the Interior, as he satisfied Bethmann's need for long dialectical discussions, for which I had neither time nor inclination.

"It was very regrettable that Bethmann did not accept Tirpitz's resignation as far back as 1915. I think I was the only one who urgently advised him to do so, and said that it would have to come some time, and the sooner the better. But everyone else, out of consideration for public opinion, was in favour of the retention of so popular a man. We should thus have been spared much internal conflict, and Tirpitz became all the more of a popular hero by his incitement of public opinion in favour of the U boat war.

'Forgive this hurried letter; I was disturbed while writing it, but I wanted to write this evening, as I am going away to-morrow.

'With best wishes, yours, etc.,  
'JAGOW'

'Münster i W Oct. 6th, 1919.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

The Tirpitz Recollections have appeared, and, as was to be expected, it is, from first to last a piece of propaganda—with a distinctly personal colouring—against our policy and its exponents. Unpleasant as this brawl is, I should like to make some reply to this sensational pamphlet, which is naturally praised up to the skies by T's satellites. The trouble is to know where to begin and where to end. I shall of course confine myself to what affects myself and my administration. And that looks like an endless business—all these imaginary speeches, etc., etc.

I should prefer to say as little as possible about the U boat war. A narrative of all the ins and outs of that conflict would be too long, and a great deal of the material is not at my disposal. Moreover I was no longer in office at the time of the decision on January 17th. I could not defend it, but for obvious reasons I do

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not want to attack those who were then responsible. But I can't quite pass over one mention of the U-boat war. Tirpitz says that it ought to have been started in 1916. Would you be so kind as to tell me whether the enclosed draft—regarding the American feeling about war, and the possibility of war—agrees with your views? You will observe that I do not quote you as evidence; I want to avoid mentioning names as far as possible, and I shall, of course, not disclose the fact that I am consulting you now!

"Forgive my troubling you. I should be most grateful for as early a reply as possible.

"With best wishes, yours, etc.,

"JAGOW.

"Please correct the draft as you think fit and send it back with your reply."

"*The Hague. August 4th, 1920.*

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"We arrived here yesterday for two weeks of quiet and rest.

"I have just read your *Three Years in America* and I want to thank you for the kindly things you say of me and of America. Your book should be an important historical record, and I believe as time goes on the German people will recognise the wisdom of the counsel you gave your Government.

"I am, my dear Count Bernstorff,

"Sincerely yours,

"E. M. HOUSE."

"*Cannes. March 20th, 1926.*

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"Thank you for your letter of March 14th. I am glad you like what I said of you in *The Intimate Papers*. As a matter of fact, I did not say all I wished, for the reason that I thought it would be better to take a detached attitude. When my papers are all published within the next ten or fifteen years you will come in for

your full credit. You are the one man in Germany who occupied a great office during the war who had understanding of the situation not only during the war but later, during the trying period of reconstruction. If Germany had followed your counsels a different story might be written to-day.

"With all good wishes,

"Sincerely yours,

"E. M. HOUSE."

"Grundl See (Steiermark),

"June 1st, 1920.

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"Although I have not the honour to be known to you personally, I take the freedom as a former colleague to write and tell you candidly with how much interest and admiration I have read your book. You indeed foresaw everything, and your judgment was always correct.

"I learned much from your book that I had not suspected—but Your Excellency is, I think, unaware that the Wilson episodes had a further continuation in the spring of '18 as I shall make clear in my next volume.

"Ludendorff's attitude on the one side, as foolish as it was violent, and the outrageous indiscretions of irresponsible elements in Vienna, were an admirable complement to each other, and destroyed the prospect of any kind of peace.

If Your Excellency will permit me, I would like to send you that portion of my book, before publication, that deals with Wilson and the spring of '18, and I would be most obliged if you would let me know if you agree with my views.

I am with the highest respect

"Your Excellency's most humble servant,  
OTTOKAR CZECH"

"Wednesday, New York. July 29th, 1920.

"DEAR EXCELLENCY,—

"I have just read your admirable book, *My Three Years in America*, in the Scribner edition, and I am still under the strong impression of a narrative that you have made so vivid.

"How often I have thought of you in the last years! How well I remember your scepticism *in puncto* unrestricted submarine warfare! On that 14th of February, when I said good-bye to you on board the *Friedrich VIII*, your remark *in puncto* intensified U-boat war was as follows: 'Yes, if you can, all right: but if you *can't* . . . '

"I particularly remember your attitude of doubt, as your then scepticism *in puncto* U-boat was dramatically opposed to my own view, and in my inmost heart I felt that you were wanting in optimism. But how entirely right you were! Even by March 23rd, when the Russian revolution broke out, it was obvious what grave mistakes had been made.

"Page 383 in your book contains, in my view, the most complete justification of your course in Washington: Kerensky plus Wilson plus Bernstorff.

"It makes me quite sick to think of the marvellous diplomatic possibilities represented by that combination.

"How I long to see you again, sir!

"Your book will infallibly make a great impression here, all the more so as a number of people are beginning to 'think' once more.

"I would be so glad to know what are your own hopes and wherein you conceive our salvation to lie. It is infinitely sad that a policy like yours was not destined to be crowned with success in Washington. If only such a policy of understanding had been carried out to the end, German history would undoubtedly have been much enriched.

"Please give my warmest regards to the Countess and accept, etc.

"ERNST HANFSTAENGEL."

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSTANTINOPLE

IN Constantinople, after a long absence, I found but little change. The war years, indeed, lay heavy on an already overburdened land, the Young Turk Government had certainly improved the pavement of the roads and constructed trains, which now seemed out of place in that romantic city. But taken as a whole, the character of city, land and people had remained unaltered though I often felt that the secret Palace regime of Abdul Hamid was a much better expression of the spirit of the Orient than the unlucky Young Turk attempt to ape European methods of government. In all countries in the world the desire for power plays just as large a part in political conflicts as the desire to serve the fatherland. But it would be unjust to the Young Turks to assume—as has often been done in Germany since the collapse—that they were exclusively inspired by the first impulse. Some at least of their leaders were men of true good will, but even they—to use a vulgarity—could not get out of their skin neither in themselves nor in their environment could they overcome the contradictions of the spirit of the Orient and of the historic Turkish national character.

In this connection an excellent instance is the Grand Vizier Talant Pasha, subsequently murdered by an Armenian in Berlin whom I learnt to respect and like during my service in Constantinople. A man of absolute integrity, he had unusual gifts that enabled him to climb the steep ascent from the position of telegraph official to that of leading statesman and a statesman he was in the truest sense of the word. There was not a sign of the *parvenu* in his behaviour or ideas. As Grand Vizier Talant Pasha

## CONSTANTINOPLE

always gave the impression of a *grand seigneur*, and his political conceptions were unencumbered by any pettiness. I never knew any Turk who could fairly be compared with him. He did indeed often promise me more than he could perform. Perhaps he knew, when he made the promise, that the Committee of Union and Progress, whose sway was as secret as that of Abdul Hamid, would prevent its fulfilment; perhaps he hoped that he might get his way, which did not happen so often as might have been desired in our interests and in those of Turkey. However that may be, Talaat Pasha usually recognised the right way, and as time went on, and especially after every visit to Europe, he became more of a match for his mighty task. If any statesman could have succeeded in reforming the old Ottoman Empire it would have been Talaat Pasha, provided that he had been able to consolidate his power and influence. As I have mentioned above, I am not referring to the Turkish republic of to-day, with which I unfortunately have no acquaintance.

This constant and considerable contrast between desire and achievement induced in the Grand Vizier a delightful blend of scepticism and gentle cynicism, which increased the charm of that attractive personality. When I kept on pestering him about the Armenian question, he once said with a smile: "What on earth do you want? The question is settled; there are no more Armenians," a reply which, while admitting his own complicity in the crime, hinted that the European accounts of it might be exaggerated. Another time when much was expected for the cause of peace at the forthcoming Socialist Congress at Stockholm, Talaat Pasha, no real Socialists being available, appointed three members of the Turkish parliament as Socialists *ad hoc*, so that they could represent Turkey at the Congress. After that the Grand Vizier always described these three gentlemen to me as his "synthetic Socialists."

Talaat Pasha's statesmanlike gifts seem all the more astonishing as he was naturally quite uneducated according to European

standards. It was with the greatest difficulty, when Grand Vizier, that he acquired some knowledge of German and French. Just before the Kaiser's visit to Constantinople, when I was greeted on the racecourse by the Egyptian Prince Said Halim, the previous Grand Vizier, with the remark that the preparations would give me a great deal to do, I replied with a laugh. "*Quid quid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*" At that moment Talaat Pasha appeared and said appreciatively: "Oh, you speak Arabic, I see." As the practice of Oriental courtesy precluded me from explaining, I long enjoyed the false reputation of having learnt Arabic in Egypt, and it was consequently assumed that I should acquire a knowledge of Turkish. After I had got to know Talaat Pasha better, I knew that I need not have been so scrupulous, as he never made any concealment of his past and his origin. At the Munich Art Exhibition, which took place at Constantinople later on, he told me that he had received instructions to buy a picture for the Sultan, but he understood nothing of such matters and he asked me to choose one for him.

I particularly remember Talaat's visit to me after his resignation. We both lamented the military breakdown, but without a hint of mutual reproach. Talaat then observed quietly: "It was not Germany's fault that she had such poor allies."

But the most eminent statesman remains an offspring of his age and nation, and it is obviously unjust to reproach him with the fact. With this reserve I recall my constant and cordial relations with Talaat with unmixed pleasure. I settled all important business with him in person, as he alone had sufficient influence with the Committee to get his engagements fulfilled. His Foreign Minister, Nessimy Bey, was an agreeable but ineffective man, who owed his position mainly to the fact that he could speak French well. In diplomatic negotiations he tended to become long winded, and made his colleagues very restless.

After the breakdown I met Talaat only once in Berlin at the house of a common friend. It was the time when an Enquiry

## CONSTANTINOPLE

Committee of the National Assembly was first mooted, and it was characteristic of the former Grand Vizier that he told me to call him as a witness on my behalf if I were censured in any way regarding the Armenian question. He would gladly testify that I had repeatedly warned him to treat the Armenians more leniently.

Next to Talaat, Enver Pasha was, as is well known, mainly instrumental in bringing Turkey into the war. When I reached Constantinople all the leading personages there were our faithful allies. That was, indeed, inevitable, as all Orientals are, almost without exception, good diplomatists. The Turks thenceforward realised that they were lost unless we helped them to a tolerable peace. It was not then in their interest to repudiate the alliance with Germany. The Entente would have kept their undertakings just as little as they allowed themselves to be bound by Wilson's Fourteen Points. I always pressed this view officially, because I was of opinion that fear of Turkish desertion led us to be rather too accommodating to the Constantinople Government on more than one occasion. The Turks were bound to us for good or ill, and the object of our policy should have been to take our own line in finding a tolerable way out of the perils that threatened all four members of the alliance, even if we had to compel Turkey to some few sacrifices.

At the time when Turkey entered the war the position was far different. Talaat and Enver then played a decisive role under German influence, and carried with them the rather diffident Constantinople Government. Whether in so doing they did a real service to us and to Turkey is another question which cannot now be decided, because it is not possible to establish after the event whether Turkey would have been in the position to preserve her neutrality against the Entente and keep the Narrows closed. If she could have done so, that would, for us, have been the better solution of the question, for it was not in our interest to turn the war into a world war by the adherence of

Turkey The Turks did us one service and one only—by preventing imports into Russia through the Narrows. Whether Russia would have collapsed had the Narrows not been closed is likewise a question that cannot now be decided, but I should be disposed to answer—Yes.

Said Halim Pasha, who was Grand Vizier during the critical period, told me that the Turkish Government had already decided by an overwhelming majority to come into the war on our side, but they wanted to gain time, in order to make the necessary preparations. If this statement is to be regarded as historic truth, and not as a diplomatic reflection *ex post*, the Turkish Ministers at the outset of the war must have played their allotted parts in Oriental fashion, for Djemal Pasha openly expressed himself as in favour of the Entente. Moreover the Finance Minister, Djavid Bey, was actually hostile to the Turkish war policy, and he proved this by his resignation from the Cabinet when the decision had been taken. As we cannot assume that these astute Turkish diplomats entered the war out of a light hearted affection for us, we must regard as the decisive motive the fact that the aim of the war for Russia was the conquest of Constantinople. Consequently there was no other hope of salvation for Turkey except by a German victory, which she accordingly tried to bring about. In this connection it is significant that, after the collapse of Russia, the Turks were drunk with victory, and involved us in fresh difficulties by pursuing annexations in the Caucasus. There was then a brief period during which the Turks were to be bought at a high price for a satisfactory separate peace. They regarded their war as brought to a victorious conclusion, overlooking the fact that though the Entente Powers had originally been drawn into war with the object of keeping Germany down, now in the course of the struggle, they had acquired the firm intention of settling the Oriental question according to their own views and interests.

Whatever may be the judgment of world history regarding

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German and Turkish policy during the war, one fact should remain unassailable: Talaat was a true friend to Germany at a difficult time. His complicity in the Armenian crime he atoned for by his death. On this matter he was an offspring of his nation. The statesmen of other lands have often been equally guilty in not opposing and rebuking the prejudices of their fellow-citizens, and it would be unjust to apply European standards to a Turkish statesman, even to one of the calibre of Talaat Pasha.

On my arrival in Constantinople I was greeted with the news that the Kaiser intended to pay a visit to the Sultan in a fortnight's time. This expedition had not been contemplated when I reported in Berlin and at General Headquarters before taking up my post. At that time the Kaiser was merely intending to pay a return visit to the King of Bulgaria, and there seemed no occasion for him to proceed to the Bosphorus. Moreover, the Berlin Government was justifiably doubtful whether the person of the Monarch would be secure in Constantinople, as there were many Entente nationals still living there, and still more supporters of the Entente among the inhabitants of Pera. But the Turkish Government, for reasons of prestige, was extremely anxious that no preference should be shown to the Bulgarians. The safety of the Monarch's person was guaranteed, and by the help of the astute Ambassador in Berlin, Hakkı Pasha, the Turkish Government's ambition was achieved; the Kaiser was to be received in Constantinople.

I had got to know Hakkı Pasha rather well before my departure from Berlin. There had been a good deal of opportunity for doing so, as Djemal Pasha, and Djavid Bey, the Finance Minister, were in Berlin on a visit, and various social and political gatherings were arranged in their honour. Hakkı Pasha was, more especially according to European standards, after the Grand Vizier, the most eminent Turkish statesman. He had had a thorough training in diplomacy and international law,

he was personally agreeable, and displayed great ability in negotiation. Moreover, as a former Grand Vizier, he was held in high esteem in his own country, so that he could rely on the powerful national backing which is so necessary to a diplomat.

The prospect of so imminent a visit from the Kaiser was naturally not attractive to me, as I would have preferred to familiarise myself with my work first, added to which the Embassy was not yet furnished. I had taken refuge to begin with in the scantily furnished summer Embassy at Therapia on the upper Bosphorus, and drove daily into the city to deal with business. A greater contrast can hardly be imagined than the idyllic peace of the lovely Embassy park at Therapia, the voyage on the Bosphorus with its enchanting glimpses of glittering palaces, glorious gardens, and gambolling dolphins, all bathed in a deep blue that a northerner can only dream of, and, on the other side, the heat and stench of the city, the restless hurry and agitation of the Embassy, where the great overcrowded entrance hall always gave one the feeling that one was entering a railway station. The reception rooms above were still full of Kühlmann's furniture half packed up, while mine had been left behind in Washington. For this reason I had at first wanted to refuse the post at Constantinople, as I did not see how I was going to provide myself with complete new furniture and equipment. Kühlmann would not hear of a refusal on this ground but took occasion to arrange that the Embassy should be fitted out with, at least the bare necessities from official sources. Moreover the American Government was accommodating enough to allow the removal of my furniture from Washington, though it did not in fact arrive in Constantinople until the spring of 1918.

It was therefore necessary to bring order out of chaos with all available speed, and, as far as could be done, to prepare the Embassy for the Kaiser's reception. Into this feverish activity broke the news of the death of the Queen of Bulgaria. As a result, the Kaiser's visit was postponed for a month, to our great

relief. I have already mentioned that I was present upon the occasion of the Monarch's previous visit, so I could make good use of my experiences at that time. Apart from the fact that the persons engaged were different, the visits of foreign rulers to Constantinople always proceeded according to the same programme. The Kaiser had, and indeed expressed, a great affection for the Turks and their magnificent capital; so he always arrived in the very best of moods. Never have I seen him in such good humour as upon the occasion of his two visits to Constantinople. This sympathy awakened a prompt response from the Turks, who are very sensitive to the feelings with which they are regarded. As a result, the Imperial visit passed off in a glow of genuine cordiality. The Turks conceived of the Kaiser as the champion of German Turkophil policy, and he himself was very ready to play the part. As we were steaming along the Bosphorus I reminded the Sovereign of his first visit, and he mentioned the well-known fact that Bismarck had opposed it at the time. The Kaiser added that on his return home he had prophesied to the Chancellor that the day would come when the Turks would enter the war as our allies, which Bismarck said was nonsense. And the Kaiser said with great vehemence that he would never forget how the Turks had stood by him when all his relations had declared war on him.

The traditional Hohenzollern weather remained loyal to the Kaiser in Constantinople. The autumn sun, as it had done twenty-eight years before, shone from a cloudless sky during the whole visit, and added much to the Oriental splendour of the reception. The entry into the capital, richly decorated as it was and thronged by vast crowds, offered an unforgettable spectacle. One of the Sultan's sons drove to meet the Kaiser at the terminus, where the line reaches the Sea of Marmora. Enver Pasha and I there joined him, together with the head of the military mission and the Naval Attaché. The Sultan was at the railway station in Constantinople, surrounded by all the Turkish

dignitaries. Enver Pasha acted as interpreter, and drove in the first car with the two monarchs. The arrangements made by the Turkish Government functioned admirably, though extremely drastic and truly Turkish methods had been employed to ensure success. Thousands of more or less suspicious persons had been transported to the islands without more ado, while care had been taken that large numbers of women should be seen about the streets, so that the cultural progress of the country under the Young Turk regime might be demonstrated *ad oculos*. Nowhere better than in Turkey is it understood how to win the favour of the passing guest by the erection of Potemkin villages.

The Turkish Army received due recognition at this visit, accompanied by Liman von Sanders Pasha the Kaiser visited the battlefields on the Dardanelles, where that commander, so admirably suited to the leadership of Turkish troops, won glorious laurels for the Turkish arms. The Sovereign also reviewed the German Asiatic Corps which was on the point of setting out for Syria. In due recognition of the Kaiser's tastes, a good deal of time was left to him to visit the mosques, the old Serail, and the other wonderful buildings of Stamboul. Moreover, in drawing up the programme in agreement with the Turkish Court, I urged that it was specially important that as many people as possible should see and speak with the Monarch, so as to avoid, as far as might be, giving grounds for disappointment or offence. The aged Sultan had to be spared as far as possible, so the arrangement was made that only the evening banquets should be held at Dolmabagde, while the luncheons should take place at Yildiz, where the Kaiser was staying, the invitations to the latter being issued from the German side. The Kaiser was so much taken aback by an Oriental luxury that seemed to him excessive in war time that he, who was in effect at home at Yildiz, after the first luncheon gave orders that the menus should be shortened. This seemed very strange to the Turkish

Court officials and a cynic is said to have asked who pocketed the resultant savings. However, these small luncheon parties enabled the Kaiser to have long conversations with influential Ottoman dignitaries. I specially remember one day, when the Sheik ul-Islam was sitting between the Kaiser and myself, and the Monarch plunged into a vehement discussion, through an interpreter, with the highest Mohammedan ecclesiastics on the subject of Islamic art and customs. Though possibly not on this occasion, it was certainly brought home to the Emperor that such conversations through interpreters may be extremely perilous. After the evening banquets the Sultan was accustomed to withdraw for a short time alone with his guest, only Enver Pasha being present as being the Turk best acquainted with the German language. Later on it was mentioned to me by the Sultan that the Emperor had promised on one of these occasions to secure a settlement of the Turco-Bulgarian dispute regarding the Maritza frontier in favour of Turkey. The Kaiser always denied this. Probably he merely let fall a few polite and non-committal remarks that would represent our purely mediatory standpoint on this question.

Apart from the conversations between the two monarchs, the political questions were thoroughly discussed at the Sublime Porte on the day when the Kaiser visited the Dardanelles. These negotiations were conducted on the German side by Secretary of State von Kuhlmann, Ambassador von Rosenberg and myself, while Turkey was represented by Talaat Pasha, Nessimy Bey and Hakkı Pasha. The Ottoman Government wanted to use the favourable opportunity to secure an extension in their favour of the Turco-German treaties of alliance. These already represented a *societas leonina* to our disadvantage, but the Imperial Government was anxious at all costs to prevent the defection of Turkey, in order to maintain, from considerations of prestige, the Quadruple Alliance intact until the conclusion of peace. Hence the inclination on the German side to accede to all

Turkish demands, in the hope that when peace came to be negotiated the Ottoman Government would voluntarily forgo them when it was realised that they would involve a continuation of the war. Kühlmann, especially, was firmly convinced that Turkey would prove amenable on all questions, provided she could secure a general recognition of the abolition of the Capitulations. The negotiations were consequently conducted more or less as a friendly conversation designed, as far as possible, to reduce the Turkish demands. This result was, in the main, achieved, and embodied in a supplementary treaty which was soon afterwards signed by the Grand Vizier and myself.

The Kaiser invited himself to an afternoon tea party at the Embassy, and desired that this might be the occasion for the reception of German military and naval officers and the German colony. This presented me with an extremely awkward problem. The number of ladies and gentlemen to be invited could be limited, but not without giving great offence, which would have spoilt the whole affair. This was the only opportunity that the Germans would have of seeing their Emperor, and I decided to draw the circle as wide as possible. So nearly a thousand people were present.

The German school had been drawn up in the Embassy garden, and the children greeted the Monarch by singing a German song, to which he listened from the balcony. His Majesty was much impressed by the beauty of the view. Anyone who has stood there of an evening will never forget that incomparable panorama of the most magnificent city in the world. The setting sun had flooded the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmora with a reddish shimmer, from which the white palaces and minarets on the shores towered up against the sky, and in the distance the legendary Olympus hung in a rosy glow above the Isles of Princes, pearls of the Sea of Marmora. The Kaiser was indeed right when he said to me that no other German Embassy could offer such a spectacle. His Majesty's emotion



THE KAISER LAYING A WREATH ON THE GRAVE OF  
FIELD-MARSHAL VON DER GOLTZ AT THE SUMMER EMBASSY,  
THERAPIA, 1917. COUNT BERNSTORFF IS IN THE SECOND ROW



found expression in the bantering tone in which he liked to talk to me, and in which he said he would gladly exchange posts with me.

The Kaiser was less pleased by the other reception arrangements, as he had plainly not expected to have to greet so many people. On his departure His Majesty said to me in a reproachful tone that he had never seen an Embassy overcrowded in such fashion. But he resumed his friendly attitude at once when I explained my reasons and said that the Germans in Constantinople all wanted to see His Majesty. However, I did not convince him that my view was right, for a year later, when I met him for the last time at Spa, the Kaiser again referred to "that dreadful tea-party at the Embassy." In this case, too, my standpoint was plainly too democratic for the Monarch, who unfortunately never grasped the truth that the German Imperial regime must be democratic or perish.

On one of his voyages on the Bosphorus the Kaiser paid a visit to the summer Embassy at Therapia, which was not inhabited at that season of the year, but could not be passed over, as in one of the loveliest parts of the park a cemetery had been laid out for those Germans who had met their end in Turkey. His Majesty laid wreaths on the graves of Field-Marshal von der Goltz, Ambassador von Wangenheim, and von Leipzig, the Military Attaché, who lie at rest in that lovely spot, without having had to witness the collapse of their fatherland. The Kaiser's well-known aversion to modern German art was very evident on this occasion when he came to the large unfinished memorial by Kolbe the sculptor at the entrance to the cemetery, and criticised it with some vigour. The commission for this had been given by my predecessor Kuhlmann, so I was not responsible; but I did, in fact, regard this work of Kolbe's as extremely artistic and beautiful. However, although Stein, the War Minister, who was present, objected to the allegory even more strongly than His Majesty, Kolbe completed his work, to which I shall return at a later stage. The memorial represents the

angel of death bearing the naked body of a wounded man.

The end of the Imperial visit meant for me the beginning of the daily round at Constantinople, where there was plenty of work to be done. In one direction it was my task to do what could be done to further Kühlmann's efforts to secure a tolerable peace. My own activity was mainly concerned with providing moral support for Turkey, so that she might put up some resistance to the enemy, and at the same time some preparation might be made for the reconstruction of the country and the nation after the war.

I mentioned above that I regarded Lord Cromer as the most eminent statesman with whom I have been brought into close contact. His example was constantly before my mind, and my idea was to transform Turkey into a German Egypt. The conditions for this were a negotiated peace, and a subsequent period of quiet work inspired by affection for the Turkish people. The first requisite was to settle the financial question, and the Turkish Finance Minister, Djavid Bey, was proposing to go to Berlin for this purpose. I wrote the following private letter to Kühlmann.

"Constantinople. Dec. 15th, 1917

"MY DEAR KÜHLMANN,—

"Even before I received your kind letter of the 11th instant the position regarding Djavid Bey's visit to Berlin had altered, and with it my own attitude. My official report goes off at the same time as this letter. If Djavid Bey is ready to make us economic concessions, there is no reason for getting rid of him. However, I think he has only been converted by the present political situation and by the campaign carried on against him by the supporters of Ismail Hakkı. For the moment we are now the stronger party here, and will remain so until the conclusion of peace. What will happen then will naturally depend on the

nature of the peace. On that account we ought now to pin down Djavid Bey to such definite undertakings as will secure us as far as possible against the outcome.

"The internal situation here is causing the Government a good deal of anxiety. Fethy Bey seems to have a fairly strong opposition behind him under the standard of 'Rescuing the country from corruption.' For the present I regard this virtuous St. George, who proposes to slay the dragon of corruption, with a great deal of scepticism. I am inclined to assume that he merely wants to get into power, which he will then use in much the same fashion as those who at present hold it.

"I hope you may succeed in securing peace with Russia. Unfortunately I could not prevent Nessimy going to Berlin. The people here are only too anxious to do something to raise the general morale and create the impression that peace is very near.

" . . . . .

"B."

The question of finance was my main anxiety, and I wrote soon afterwards to my friend Bussche, who was then Under-Secretary of State:

"Konst. Dec. 22nd, '17.

"MY DEAR BUSSCHE,—

"As you will have gathered from my official telegrams, I am very apprehensive regarding the forthcoming negotiations with Djavid Bey in Berlin. I foresee that as a result of the political situation, peace negotiations, etc., no one will have time for Djavid Bey. The Secretary of State and Rosenberg are in Brest-Litovsk, and you will have enough to do to keep in touch with them. Now the economic situation here has gradually become so involved and difficult that it will be the whole time job of one person to thrash matters out with Djavid. Kobner, the Financial

Attaché to the Embassy, is an able man and very fully informed, but he has not the authority to treat with so wily a fox as Djavid Bey, who, as far as economic affairs are concerned, has the Turkish Government in his pocket, at least as long as the discussions with him continue. Now we must not ignore the fact that we are here quite definitely the stronger party, and until peace is concluded we can get our way on all points. After peace is concluded the situation will be quite different, so we must make hay while the sun shines. In my opinion, some person should be appointed in Berlin to conduct the entire negotiations on behalf of the Government, so that Djavid should not have to treat with several people, as on the last occasion, and more or less flit like a bee from flower to flower, and suck the honey so that nothing is left for us. Who this person should be, it is for you to decide. Some of us here have suggested Helfferich. I do not know if he is free. I cannot propose myself, as my presence here is indicated as essential. Körner will arrive in Berlin on Jan 1st, two days before Djavid, and can provide the person in question with all the necessary information. In time, everything can be settled, if only someone can be found who has the time and authority needed to treat with Djavid. I could, of course, send Dieckhoff, who has been dealing with these matters here, but I cannot provide you with what is needed most of all, and that is an appropriate person to preside over the negotiations.

'I cannot sufficiently impress upon you that this is our last opportunity to secure our economic future here. If we do nothing now, we shall play a lamentable and ridiculous part in Turkey after the war. The present Cabinet, which is well disposed to us, will collapse under the charge of corruption, and the next will look to the West for salvation. I know that Djavid Bey is not trusted in Berlin. But in the Kingdom of Heaven there is more joy over one repentant sinner than over a thousand just men. For these reasons I think we should seize the opportunity to get Djavid to settle the Turko-German economic future

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once for all. Of course this cannot be done without concessions in the matter of advances. There must be no expectation that Turkey will ever repay the debt. Any Turkish recognition of the debt is not worth the paper on which it is written. If we show ourselves accommodating to Turkey, we shall back up the existing Cabinet which is friendly to us, and get all the economic advantages that are to be had in this country. Perhaps my last suggestion may find favour in Berlin, namely that only the main principles shall be there decided, and all else settled here.

“ . . . . .

“B.”

In the meantime Herr von Gwinner, General Manager of the Deutsche Bank, made a most urgent and despairing appeal to me regarding the Baghdad Railway. His indignation with the Turkish Government was such that he proposed that in the last resort the claims of the Baghdad Railway should be collected by military force. I wrote to him as follows:

“Constantinople. Jan. 1st, 1918.

“MY DEAR HERR GWINNER,—

“In the four months since my arrival here I have daily had to deal in detail with the Baghdad Railway. Here and in Berlin all are agreed that the railway must be helped; it is only as to the means of doing so that views differ. Having regard to the present situation here I have been forced to the conclusion that it would have been a waste of time to address an ultimatum to Enver Pasha.

“My reasons are as follows:

“1. The wily Turks know quite well that we must provide military assistance because the separate peace with Russia has brought us to a life-and-death struggle with England. England is fighting mainly over Belgium and Arabia. On both these points we *must* therefore conquer or perish.

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THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

"2. Enver's position is so weakened that he is now supported only by us and by the Grand Vizier on our account. His effective influence is almost gone.

"3. If we want to achieve anything here, we must take off our helmets and appear in civilian guise with pecuniary promises in one hand and threats to withdraw any such favours in the other—we must offer the cake while showing the whip. People are sick of militarism here. Demands put forward from military sources meet, for that reason, with specially lively opposition.

"I understand your mistrust of Djavid Bey. However, in view of the altered situation, he is ready to join us in a general understanding. Saul has turned into Paul. I have therefore repeatedly and strongly urged that this line should be taken in Berlin. I regard the present negotiations with Djavid as the best and probably the last opportunity to secure our ends here. I assure you that in so acting we shall not merely put the Baghdad Railway on a sound basis but the whole of Turkey as well.

'I have sent Herr Dieckhoff, our Secretary of Legation, to Berlin so that there may be someone there to represent my standpoint, he will hand you this letter, and inform you in detail as to the situation here. He has for some time been in charge of the Baghdad Railway affairs and other business of the kind.

"B.

I will not here deal with the details of the Berlin negotiations, except to mention that they did not proceed as desired. I wrote as follows to Herr Gwinner:

"Constantinople. 5.2.18.

In connection with my letter of the 1st instant, I send you herewith a few lines in the strictest confidence.

'Towards the negotiations with Djavid Bey in Berlin, my attitude is that of Pontius Pilate: I wash my hands in innocence.

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From the very outset, my view was that we should categorically refuse all Djavid's demands, until he pledged himself in writing to fulfil our own. Our political position in regard to Turkey is now so strong that we can adopt this standpoint without misgiving. It was not done, and we have achieved nothing. I observe the usual fate of diplomats approaching me—just as happened a year ago in America. No attention is paid to us, and then we are made responsible for the consequences. How can it be supposed in Berlin that we can achieve anything here if all our means of exerting pressure are to go for nothing in Berlin? Something may yet be saved if it is decided in Berlin not to allow Djavid Bey to return there in March and he is told that negotiations must take place here. No one in Berlin has even any time for Turkish affairs, and they are ultimately dealt with in a rush *inter pocula*. I am writing this because you were so kind as to ask my help in the matter of the Baghdad Railway. Perhaps you may succeed in influencing the appropriate quarters in Berlin. The Secretary of State and Under-Secretary of State are entirely of my opinion, but neither of them can deal with these matters as Brest-Litovsk takes up all their time.

“ . . . . .

“B.”

As the above letter crossed one from Gwinner, I wrote again:

“Constantinople. Feb. 18th.

“ . . . . .

“You will have gathered from my letter of the 5th instant that I too am not much edified by the results of the negotiations with Djavid Bey in Berlin. The view seems to be current in Berlin that our main effort must always be to keep the Turks in a good humour. So long as this attitude prevails, we shall get no further. ‘Constant dropping wears away the stone,’ and on that account I hope to get my view accepted that we should help the Turks in

every direction, but demand in return that the country shall be entirely under our economic control. This programme is the only one that meets the interests of both countries, as Turkey can never mend her fortunes on her own account. And it can be carried out, as Turkey is now wholly dependent on us and can neither help nor harm us. In this programme the affairs of the Baghdad Railway must, of course, be comprehensively dealt with and settled.

"B'

In reply to a further appeal for help I wrote the following reply

23 3 18.

"

"I can entirely understand your mistrust of Turkey. We have hitherto shown ourselves very accommodating to our friends here, probably far too much so. And yet the matter is one that admits of doubt, because the value to us of the closing of the Dardanelles is a factor that it is difficult to estimate. Until the collapse of Russia, German policy here was wholly based on the consideration that we could pay almost any price for the closure of the Dardanelles. Now that Russia has collapsed, and in the future it may be politically indifferent to us whether Turkey deserts us or not, since after all as allies they are, from the political, financial, economic and moral point of view, no more than a burden. Incidentally, I regard their defection as in the last degree improbable, because a separate peace would involve Turkey in the loss of her Arabian territories, which she hopes to reconquer with our help. Moreover, we have nothing more to expect from the Turks in the political sphere, while they want a great deal more out of us.

"Now I come to the economic question. After the war our economic position will be extraordinarily unpleasant. A peace by negotiation, such as I had agreed a year ago with Wilson, will

never be concluded by us, because our influential circles will have none of it. The economic war will therefore continue in one form or another. From this only a definite German victory could save us, and this I regard as out of the question, as we shall find it difficult to defeat England and impossible to defeat America. If therefore we must count upon an economic war, it seems to me necessary to take raw materials where we can find them. The supply in this country is certainly small, but the Devil will eat flies in an extremity. I therefore take the view that we should treat with Djavid just as we did with the Bolsheviks. I would tell him that we were ready to regard the money we had given the Turks as a subvention for the defence of the Dardanelles, on condition that the Turks, on their part, brought in a Liquidation Law, handed over to us all the raw material they possess, and met our other demands. They must ally themselves to us to the same extent economically as they have done politically. If they refuse, we will neither forgive them their debts nor advance them any further loan. Djavid is no statesman, but he is a clever little man of business; he would respect and probably even admire such an attitude, and would then become our sincere friend. He always tries to make as much as he can for himself, and how can he be blamed for pursuing such a course when it has always enabled him to get what he wanted?

"I believe that the refusal of money will be just as effective as the guns of the *Goeben*.

"B."

I have included the above letters in my narrative because I believe that letters will take the reader back quicker and more vividly into the atmosphere of those days. I have cut out all personal matters and formalities of phrase that are devoid of interest to-day.

The question of peace caused me great anxiety. Frederick the Great called it a "Miracle de la Maison de Brandenbourg"

every direction, but demand in return that the country shall be entirely under our economic control. This programme is the only one that meets the interests of both countries, as Turkey can never mend her fortunes on her own account. And it can be carried out, as Turkey is now wholly dependent on us and can neither help nor harm us. In this programme the affairs of the Baghdad Railway must, of course, be comprehensively dealt with and settled.

"B"

In reply to a further appeal for help I wrote the following reply:

"23.3.18.

"

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when Peter III ascended the throne of Russia and made peace with him. In a similar situation the Russian collapse was for us a miracle, that might well be our salvation after we had missed the first opportunity a year before. I wrote to Erzberger on the matter as follows:

"Constantinople. 18.XII.17

"DEAR HERR ERZBERGER,—

"It is a very great pleasure to me to hear from you. Your friendly letter revived the memory of many a pleasant evening in Berlin.

'I found the last news from Germany rather disappointing. If peace is not made with Russia, and the Prussian House of Parliament does not accept the Franchise Bill, we shall look just as foolish as we did a year ago. What is the use of saying that we are waging a defensive war, and are anxious to democratise ourselves, if we are always found wanting when it comes to the *hic Rhodus hic salta*. I still firmly believe that there will be peace with Russia. But if we make irreconcilable enemies of Lenin and Trotsky, as we did of Wilson, then I really do not know how we are ever going to extricate ourselves from this war.

'I am very well content here. There is so much work to do that the spiritual desolation of Constantinople in other respects does not seem unpleasant. There is not much more to be expected from the Turks, especially as, even here, we cannot determine on a single and consistent policy.

"With heartiest good wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

"B

Erzberger always the most sanguine of men, replied with the following letter, contemplating a peace of negotiation with Russia, which should be the prelude for further hopeful developments that unfortunately failed to materialise.

Among my papers I find two more letters to Erzberger which I insert after his own.

*"Berlin, W. Dec. 23rd, '17.*

" . . . . .

"At present the general situation here is favourable. I have great hopes that it will be possible to make peace with Russia. In my opinion the Bolsheviks will absolutely insist that a democratic peace must apply to the whole world, and will not agree that we should subsequently conclude an imperialistic peace with the West. The Bolsheviks have repeatedly assured me of this. We must therefore be content if our negotiators merely get them to agree to a certain interval, perhaps of a month, within which we are pledged to a democratic peace in the West. None the less I am optimistic enough to believe that as soon as we have made peace with Russia, a general peace will soon follow. Our enemies must then realise that their schemes against us have failed, for our situation will then improve from day to day.

"I see however two difficulties in the way of peace with Russia. I am not thinking so much of the circumstance that the present Government may not remain at the helm, as of the Armenian question, which is likely to demand certain further sacrifices from Turkey, for there can be little doubt that the Bolsheviks will insist on an autonomous Armenia; and secondly of the interpretation to be given to the doctrine of self-determination. Many schools of thought in Germany, with which you are no doubt acquainted, regard this demand merely as a cloak for annexationism, and believe that the Russians are as stupid and as innocent as the annexationists imagine. They will be sorely disillusioned.

"I fancy the Franchise Bill will get through in the end. I was not perturbed by the first reading. It may well be that the Bill will be accepted by February. We are doing our best to secure this.

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"I entirely agree with your Excellency, in so far as I cannot conceive of the end and outcome of the war if we do not make peace with Russia, and if we now make enemies of the Bolsheviks. That must be avoided at all costs.

"I note your Excellency's opinions regarding Turkey; I had already embodied them in an official memorandum in February 1916, when I came back from visiting that country. I am glad to see from your letter that you like being in Constantinople.

"With every acknowledgment of your good wishes,

"M. ERZBERGER."

"Constantinople. Jan. 1st, '18

"DEAR HERR ERZBERGER,—

According to to-day's news peace with Russia is as good as made. I too believe that a general peace will soon follow. Our enemies in the West will not be able to face public opinion in their own country as soon as our readiness to make a negotiated peace with Russia has become an undisputed fact. Herem lay our diplomatic blunder of last year, that we did not express our readiness to do this clearly and publicly to Wilson. We could then have produced exactly the same situation that exists to-day, with the distinction that we at that time had Wilson to deal with, and now we have Lenin.

"When peace is concluded with Russia, it will be essential to find some means of again harnessing Wilson to the chariot of peace and stop him acting as a stimulating influence upon the others. Hitherto we have completely ignored Wilson, which was right enough as long as our business lay with Lenin. But henceforward Wilson will be the central figure. It ought to be possible to get at him by approaching Colonel House, who is always insisting on the war aims of the Allies. Although I was a personal friend of House, it was of course not possible for me to remain in touch with him. But we shall have to

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make peace with him; no other expedient is possible.

"As regards Turkey, in view of the forthcoming negotiations with Djavid Bey I hope we shall be able to work out a comprehensive plan for the regeneration of the country. Since I have been here, I have stood out for such a plan, but as you know, there are always a great many bureaucratic and military obstacles to be overcome before one can establish a unified and consistent policy.

"B."

"Constantinople. 30.3.18.

".....

"As regards military matters we have latterly been very successful, but I am not so well satisfied with our policy. On the previous occasions when we have made peace, we demanded too much. *Vestigia terret!* The others will not feel encouraged to make peace with us. We may however be able to force them to do so, though I regard this as out of the question in the case of England and America.

"I enclose a letter from one of your friends here. He, like your other friend Schade, and the travelling companion of your colleague Pfeiffer, do really take too black a view of the conditions here. I do not want to palliate anything, but the Turkish Government is now making a real and serious effort to prevent excesses. It was perhaps a blunder to make public mention of the atrocities undoubtedly committed by the Armenian bands. At the time this seemed necessary to justify the advance of the Turkish troops, in spite of the then existing armistice. Moreover the Turkish Government was very glad to find a subsequent excuse for previous transgressions. Latterly there has been more conciliation. It is one of my daily tasks to warn the authorities here to treat the Christians and the Jews properly, and I think I can say that I have hitherto succeeded in preventing indiscretions or at least in rectifying them in time.

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"Most disquieting of all is the question of food supplies. There is actually a famine, which is only veiled by the fact that no one troubles whether the poor people die, while all the rest are war profiteers in some line or other and are prepared to pay the highest prices. In this matter, too, I am trying to induce the Government to take steps. Whether they will exert themselves to do so remains to be seen. In general the moment should be a favourable one, as the Talaat Ministry is in a very strong position as a result of the reconquest of Erzerum and Trebizond.

'Allowing for the darker sides of the situation here, it must again be emphasised that no one before the war could have imagined that Turkey could be capable of so great an effort. The Young Turks must be allowed a period of peaceful probation before they are damned. Since they have been in power there has been an uninterrupted succession of wars and revolutions. I am still convinced that we could reform this country, if we would resolve upon a consistent policy. Our dealings have as usual been too spasmodic and vague. I hope finally to get my way in this regard. If I fail, it will not be at all pleasant to take the responsibility for what has been going on here. From my previous experience in my profession I would define a diplomat as a man who is never listened to, but is afterwards made responsible for the result.

"B'

The above questions are also dealt with in the following two letters to Lindenberg, a great industrialist, and to Heincken, general manager of the North German Lloyd, with both of whom I was on excellent terms.

"Constantinople. 26.2.18.

"DEAR HERR LINDENBERG,—

"As regards Turkey, it is always easy to deal in catchwords

In certain connections, the comparison with a blown egg is completely just. As a result of eight years of uninterrupted war, the country is sucked dry and half depopulated. It must therefore be reconstituted afresh like a colony. With the exception of petroleum and coal, there are hardly any raw materials here that are in a condition to be used. The lack of transport is specially serious. A beginning would have to be made with the restoration of agriculture and the construction of railways, for which we should have to provide the necessary capital. All this needs time. If as a start we could secure the exploitation of the petroleum and coal, and the contracts for the construction of the necessary railways, our industry would have a profitable field of activity in compensation for its very restricted opportunities abroad after the war. It is not, of course, to be expected that we should be drawing large profits within a few weeks.

“B.”

“Constantinople. 30.9.18.

“DEAR HERR HEINEKEN,—

“Accept my warmest thanks for so kindly sending me the 1917-18 Yearbook of the North German Lloyd. I have read it with great interest, and in doing so I thought of the good old times when we were able to work together in America.

“The question of the entry of America into the war, with which you deal in the introduction, will occupy historians and politicians until the end of all time. This question is indissolubly united with the other and now much discussed problem of the German war aims. An unprejudiced view of the matter will not be possible until the war is at an end. We could have had a ‘peace by understanding’ without America coming into the war. But at that time we did not want such a peace, nor were we willing to allow the United States to act as mediator. The United States would never have consented to an ‘enforced peace,’ as you rightly remark in your introduction, without entering the war.

On that account I do not think it will be possible to arrive at a just estimate of all these problems, which have by now become historical, until a general peace is signed. The adherents of a 'peace by understanding' condemn our policy towards America, because their aim was thus dismissed to a distant future. The adherents of an enforced peace approved that policy because it led with almost absolute certainty to war with America. Every consistent policy, even if wrong, is better than an inconsistent one. Here lay our blunder *vis à vis* America. At that time, no definite decision had been reached in Germany as to which policy should be followed. I myself did not know until the last moment which party would gain the day. As a result we got a reputation of insincerity with the Americans, whereas we did not ourselves know what we intended to do

"B"

Apart from the two great questions of peace, and the resurrection of Turkey, there were several others that were involved with these two main preoccupations of the Constantinople Embassy—the Arabian, Bulgarian, Jewish and Caucasian questions. I should be carried far beyond the limits of this present book were I to attempt to write a history of Turkey during the world war until the porcelain peace of Sèvres, which Mustafa Kemal so successfully destroyed. My only concern is with personal recollections of my own activities, which are most vividly reflected in letters, when such are available. Private letters tend to contain more of the *vraie vérité*, as the French say, than official statements and reports, which are not, indeed, at my disposal as they had been for my first book: for the period covered by that volume all the documents had been published by the Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry

Regarding the Arabian question I was more especially in correspondence with the subsequent Chancellor, Franz von

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Papen, who had formerly been Military Attaché in Washington and was then General Staff Officer on the Turkish Front. My first letter is dated October 21st, 1917, and is as follows:

"MY DEAR HERR VON PAPEN,—

"I was very glad to hear that the situation is developing favourably in your part of the world. Any conflict would have been unpleasant. I hope you will now secure the desired results.

"I would be delighted to pay you a visit at Jerusalem during the course of the winter, but who knows whether I shall be able to get away? I should much like to view the situation there at close quarters, and more especially to study the Jewish question, which so often gives us trouble.

"The Emperor's visit went off splendidly. Luck favoured us in every way, so that for once the official enthusiasm did reflect the actual facts.

"Always yours,

"B."

In the above letter mention is made of the Jewish question. That was the time of the Balfour Declaration, and I too had discussed with Talaat Pasha the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. Talaat was ready to promise all I wanted, provided Palestine remained Turkish after the war, but he took every opportunity of saying: "I will gladly establish a national home for the Jews to please you, but, mark my words, the Arabs will destroy the Jews." On this question I wrote a letter on November 1st to Georg Bernhard, then Chief Editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*, who had sent two representatives to Constantinople: Julius Becker and Emil Ludwig. There were at that time a number of German journalists in Constantinople, as an exchange of visits was taking place.

"3.11.17

'MY DEAR HERR BERNHARD,—

'Of course I will do my best for Herr Dr Julius Becker. He has not yet arrived. He is certainly coming at the right moment, as there has been a great espionage agitation in Palestine—where, incidentally, the bombardment began to-day—which has greatly excited the Jewish community. The Chief Rabbi is now off to Jerusalem, so that there should be adequate information as to the position of the Jews. Talaat gave me the most binding assurances that there would be no repercussions of the espionage affair. And indeed it is obvious that he would not allow Djemal Pasha nor Dr Becker nor the Chief Rabbi to go to Palestine if he contemplated a persecution of the Jews. Besides, Falkenhayn is at present on the spot, so that Djemal's independence is rather circumscribed. These questions are part of our daily bread here. Dr Ruppin is in charge of them.

"To-morrow evening we have a beer evening—or whatever you like to call it—for the German Press and their Turkish friends. We were delighted to have Herr Ullstein to lunch yesterday. The visit seemed to go off well. Dr Emil Ludwig has not been so lucky; I recommended him warmly to Djemal, and the latter was quite willing, but the German Higher Command has been making difficulties. Dr Ludwig does not seem much perturbed at not being able to start for the present.

"The Emperor's visit and the victory in Italy have had a very favourable effect here. Do not be led astray by any assertions to the contrary. Our difficulties here will only begin with the peace negotiations, when we have to recover Mesopotamia and Armenia for the Turks.

So far as can be judged from here, the present Chancellorship crisis seems to have passed off better than the previous one; it is surely a step in the right direction that the candidates affected should first have consulted with the Reichstag. We are rather badly placed here on such occasions, as we do not know whether

the telegrams that reach us are merely indications of the atmosphere or are based on definite information. However, it now looks to us here as if Bulow would be Chancellor. You know my sympathies in this direction, and if it should be so, I only hope that Kuhlmann will stay with him. That would be the ideal solution.

"Constantinople has really two disadvantages—the excess of more or less official German posts and the resultant unpopularity of the Germans; and the devaluation of the paper money. We are approaching *Assignat* finance, and there will be nothing for it but to pay the salaries of all Germans working here in gold. However, it is very pleasant to sit at this season of the year at an open window looking out on to the Bosphorus, and we sympathise with our friends in Berlin, who can scarcely be enjoying the November sky. . . .

"B."

I return to my correspondence with Papen, and append his letter of November 21st, 1917, from Nablus.

"MY DEAR EXCELLENCY,—

"Yr. Excellency's desire to visit Jerusalem is unfortunately overtaken by events. We have been through some very evil days.

"The collapse of the army—after having had to leave the good positions which it had occupied so long—is so complete that I could never have dreamt of such a state of affairs.

"But for this utter demoralisation we could still make a stand to the south of Jerusalem. Now, however, the 8th Army bolts at the sight of every cavalry patrol. Many causes have led to this deplorable result, but chief among them has been the strategic incapacity of the troops and their leaders. The individual soldier fights admirably, but the competent officers had been killed and the rest have deserted. In Jerusalem alone we have 200 officers and 5—6,000 deserters under guard.

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"Enver is naturally insistent that Jerusalem should be held to the last—for the political effect. This would be wrong from the military point of view, as this demoralised army could only be rallied by being entirely disengaged from the enemy and reconstituted with new Divisions, but that is a matter of months.

'Any day may decide the issue now!

'Most unfortunately the Turkish Government yesterday ejected the Latin Patriarch from Jerusalem, and in rather summary fashion. The Spanish consul was not allowed to see him.

"Exz. v Falkenhayn spoke to Enver Pasha about it, and asked that the order should be suspended, as there were no military reasons for treating the old gentleman in this way. Yesterday he again pointed out that this was a needless and unfortunate thing to have done—but he did not see his way to interfere, as it was a purely political matter affecting Turkey.

'At my request a car was placed at the Patriarch's disposal to bring him here, where he arrived under the escort of Lt. Count Galen. We accommodated him here, and then sent him on by car to Nazareth, where he will remain. I mention this to establish the fact that we did everything we could on behalf of the Patriarch. For we all know what a chance this will give the Entente Press to dilate on the 'forcible abduction' of this high ecclesiastic by the 'Germans'. It was indeed, politically, a clumsy move on the part of Turkey. I wish I could have got into touch with Yr Excellency to see if something could ultimately be done—but my hands are tied here. So I did what I could to mitigate the incident.

"Yours most sincerely,

"F. VON PAPEN"

"Nablus. 27 11 17

"MY DEAR EXCELLENCY,—

"With further reference to my letter of the 21st regarding the expulsion of the Latin Patriarch, I would like to add a few

further remarks—remembering the great interest Yr. Excellency has always shown in economic matters.

"As Yr. Excellency is aware, the question of the continuance of operations is solely and exclusively one of transport. Regarding the *utterly deplorable* transport situation, Yr. Excellency will also be fully informed. Any attempts at improvement that we have been able to make could be no more than the merest patchwork, and can never be carried through until the whole service is put under expert control.

"Although the military situation is slightly better at the moment, and the army may possibly be rallied and even induced to attack, the actual issue will, in my opinion, not be greatly influenced by the relative forces on either side. If our counter-operation against Jerusalem is to be completed by the beginning of the hot season, the concentration of the necessary forces must be at an end by the middle of March at the latest.

"This presupposes an undisturbed functioning of the railway system and an improvement in the administrative arrangements as a whole. If, then, from a purely military standpoint—and what is at stake is not merely the bare possession of Jerusalem, but, presupposing a further English advance on Amman-Deraa, the possession of the whole of Western Arabia—the position calls for the employment of all available resources, it acquires, in my opinion, an even greater and more decisive importance from the politico-economic standpoint.

"Our economic relations with Turkey in peace-time can only, in my view, be established on a solid basis if we possess a corresponding influence on the communications of the country, and organise them so as best to serve the economic interests of Turkey as well as our own.

"We have to-day probably the sole and last opportunity, under pressure of the military situation, to settle this matter. If in the last resort the home authorities must decide whether these doubtless heavy demands on men and material can be

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'F VON PAPEN.'

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*"Constantinople. Dec. 27th, '17.*

"MY DEAR HERR VON PAPEN,—

"Our last letters crossed. Heartiest thanks for yours of the 27th. The questions to which you refer are our daily bread here, and we devote the keenest attention to them. In the military sphere, whatever General von Seeckt may recommend after his present visit to the front, will be carried out. As regards economic matters, I am still contending with Berlin almost as strongly as I used to do while at Washington. The whole thing could be settled promptly if Herr von Kuhlmann, who knows the conditions here and shares my views, had more free time. Unfortunately he and his able colleagues are so wholly engaged in the peace negotiations with Russia, so that we cannot expect to be regarded as more than a subsidiary theatre of war. However, I hope to prevail in the end, and that a good step forward will be taken at the negotiations with the Finance Minister now taking place in Berlin.

"B."

*"Salt. May 24th, 1918.*

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"Since I heard from Yr. Excellency for the last time, the situation here has changed a good deal, and as events prove, by no means to our disadvantage.

"Since the beginning of April I have been Chief of Staff of the 4th Army at Salt. As a result of my official dealings with General Djemal, and the subsequent events in Transjordania, I have been able to acquire a certain insight into conditions here. As Your Excellency knows, we are here conducting a war on two fronts, and policy plays a great part in more strictly military matters, so I thought it would interest Your Excellency to have a brief account of affairs.

"The present visit of the Governor of Syria, who arrived with a number of Senators and ecclesiastical dignitaries, to congratu-

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met, I am sure that Yr Excellency will, when the matter is debated, stress the politico economic considerations as all important for our future with Turkey

"The Patriarch question has now been satisfactorily solved—as indeed was highly desirable.

"I would ask you not to regard these observations as put before you officially—they are offered to Yr Exc. as a merely personal contribution to the present situation.

"With renewed assurances of the warmest regards,—

"FRANZ VON PAPEN"

"Constantinople 10.12.17

"MY DEAR HERR VON PAPEN,—

"Since your friendly letter of the 21st November, the situation with you has apparently much improved. To-day, however, I see from the English communiqué that the enemy have occupied Hebron. What that may mean I cannot judge from here. In any case it is better not to write of military matters, as one never knows whether this letter will reach you safely

"What follows may be read by anyone. This continued policy of expulsion is merely stupid, it does no good from a military point of view, it damages the reputation of Turkey, and in the last resort we shall have to bear the blame. Armenians, Jews or Greeks, the folly is the same. The country will be depopulated, partly from nationalist and partly from selfish motives.

"I constantly discuss these matters with Talaat, Enver and Nessumy, but the Turks are incorrigible. The dangers of espionage provide them with a certain excuse, and I am myself convinced that the conquest of Jerusalem was hailed with joy by almost the entire population of the city

"B"

and Syrian questions for our policy in the East, I venture to bespeak Your Excellency's personal interest at the present crisis, in case you may see your way to exercising any pressure in favour of a prompt solution of this question.

"Djemal Pasha, my Army Commander, like Tassim Bey, is convinced that an understanding could be reached even without a settlement of the Caliphate question. It would be enough to provide the Sherif with an autonomous position in Mecca and Medina. The Syrian question would not be disturbed by such a settlement. But if we do not reach an understanding, the tribes in the Kerak and Madaba districts will join the Sherif and carry the revolt further north. The attitude of the Druses will then be quite unambiguous. Even from a purely military point of view the retention of the Kerak is vital for the provisioning of the army. The matter presses for a solution from every side. The part which German troops have taken in these battles, and the expenditure of large sums of money for years past for the political pacification of the tribes—money that was not provided by Turkey—gives us a right and a duty to take a firm line with the Turkish Government in this matter. At present the Army, of which I am Chief of Staff, is fighting with its front towards the English, and defending its rear with half-hearted and inadequate measures against a movement of revolt that grows more and more menacing, and may in the end land us in a very unpleasant situation.

"Perhaps Your Excellency would be good enough to take up the question in the light of these local considerations, and induce the authorities to adopt a really decisive attitude.

"I hope Your Excellency is enjoying the best of health. On this forlorn post one is so cut off from all connection with the outside world that it is long since I heard any news of Constantinople. General von Seeckt has unfortunately refused my second request to be recalled to Germany, so that I must endure my fate here for some time longer.

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late the 4th Army on their latest success East of Jordan, gives me a rather special opportunity to ask for such assistance as Your Excellency may care to give me in the solution of the questions now at issue.

"As Your Excellency is aware, the English are working indefatigably with money and other means for a solution of the Arab question. It is undeniable that their propaganda has gained ground within the last year. Although the military co-operation of the Sheiks working with the English has not yet come up to English expectations, it must be admitted that, of late especially, a strong effort is being made to induce the various hostile groups to combine in conquering the territory east of Jordan.

"From the military point of view this situation is, for us, extremely uncomfortable. We have been successful in repulsing the English attacks from the Jordan, but we are not in a position to keep on supplying fresh forces and material to maintain the service of the Hedjaz Railway, nor to occupy the Hedjaz even as far as Maan. On the other hand, it is natural enough that the Turkish Government cannot make up its mind to give up the Hedjaz nor the railway. So that we stand confronted with military half measures, which have always proved the seed of failure.

"It seems to me that the last success of the 4th Army could have been, and might still be, better exploited, but the manifold efforts of my Army Commander, who, as Your Excellency knows, favours a policy of conciliation in the Arab question, and does his best to secure an understanding, have been fruitless.

"The reasons are obvious. Enver Pasha, and the Minister of Marine, the inaugurator of the policy that has brought us into this serious situation, cannot make up their minds to any concessions. And yet the time has come when a definite line must be taken if this whole question is not to prove disastrous to Turkey and to ourselves into the bargain.

'In view of the great importance of a solution of the Arab

and Syrian questions for our policy in the East, I venture to bespeak Your Excellency's personal interest at the present crisis, in case you may see your way to exercising any pressure in favour of a prompt solution of this question.

"Djemal Pasha, my Army Commander, like Tassim Bey, is convinced that an understanding could be reached even without a settlement of the Caliphate question. It would be enough to provide the Sherif with an autonomous position in Mecca and Medina. The Syrian question would not be disturbed by such a settlement. But if we do not reach an understanding, the tribes in the Kerak and Madaba districts will join the Sherif and carry the revolt further north. The attitude of the Druses will then be quite unambiguous. Even from a purely military point of view the retention of the Kerak is vital for the provisioning of the army. The matter presses for a solution from every side. The part which German troops have taken in these battles, and the expenditure of large sums of money for years past for the political pacification of the tribes—money that was not provided by Turkey—gives us a right and a duty to take a firm line with the Turkish Government in this matter. At present the Army, of which I am Chief of Staff, is fighting with its front towards the English, and defending its rear with half-hearted and inadequate measures against a movement of revolt that grows more and more menacing, and may in the end land us in a very unpleasant situation.

"Perhaps Your Excellency would be good enough to take up the question in the light of these local considerations, and induce the authorities to adopt a really decisive attitude.

"I hope Your Excellency is enjoying the best of health. On this forlorn post one is so cut off from all connection with the outside world that it is long since I heard any news of Constantinople. General von Seeckt has unfortunately refused my second request to be recalled to Germany, so that I must endure my fate here for some time longer.

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"Hoping to hear from Your Excellency in due course, and with my respects to the Countess and the Embassy staff, I beg to remain, etc.

'F PAPEN'

"Constantinople. 14.6.18.

"MY DEAR HERR VON PAPEN,—

'Accept my warmest thanks for your kind letter of the 24th. The matters to which you therein refer are of extreme importance. At the moment we are toiling here at such a mass of urgent questions that there does not seem much hope of the Arab question coming up for consideration. However, in influential circles the feeling has improved, and we have read articles from an authoritative source which indicate a Turk-Arab dualism as the future of the Ottoman Empire. In my constant interviews regarding the situation in Palestine and Syria I have never missed an opportunity of preaching reconciliation between Turks and Arabs. Constant dropping hollows out the stone.' But we must have more patience here than we ever needed in America. And of course there is always the danger that the issue may be the same here as there—that the catastrophe may fall before the question is solved. Here, as there, I often think of poor old Sisyphus!

"I hope I may soon have the pleasure of seeing you. I always send greetings to you by officers proceeding south. We are all well here, in spite of a great deal of work, or perhaps because of it, for distractions here are few

'B'

"Salt. 187.18.

"YOUR EXCELLENCE —

"Very many thanks for your last kind letter. I can well believe that the complex of questions is large, but none the less

the prospects of achieving some result seem more favourable than in those days *d'outre-mer*. We can at any rate report good progress in our affair, as negotiations have actually been proposed by our opponents. It will now be possible to discover what their demands will be, so that the ground may be prepared accordingly in Cospoli. It is impossible to proceed as we have been doing hitherto, as we could not survive the winter here.

"It is my intention to go to Kalat el Gesa (half-way to Maan), and then take a short period of leave. If Your Excellency should be in Cosp. or Therapia in the middle of August I shall have the honour of informing Your Excellency personally regarding the situation here, and give myself the great pleasure of seeing Yr. Exc. once more.

"With, etc.,

"FRANZ v. PAPEN."

Here follows a letter to Kuhlmann and two to my friend Haniel, who was my Counsellor of Embassy for six years in Washington, and then in the Foreign Ministry, the three letters being connected by their contents.

"Constantinople. 16.11.17.

"DEAR KUHLMANN,—

"I see from the Press telegrams that Wilson has sent my friend Colonel House to Europe. I gave you a description of this gentleman's character when you were here, but in case Haniel has told you nothing more, I would like to add that the American Minister at The Hague, Garrett, is Wilson's and House's chief confident. He is, I believe, the only diplomat who possesses the Wilson-House private cipher. House did in fact once communicate this to me and also to the American journalist Karl von Wiegand, whom House wanted to use as long as possible as a private emissary in Germany. I therefore assume that House will go to The Hague, unless the present bad relations between England, America and Holland make this

impossible. Perhaps, indeed, communications have already been broken off. However, these are matters that cannot be judged in advance. Still, I wanted to give you this information, as it may perhaps be possible to get into touch with House or Garrett through a neutral or some other confidential person.

'Ferdinand Stumm and his wife know the Garretts very well from Washington days, but of course they cannot approach each other now'

'Always your old friend,

"B."

"Constantinople. 21 10 17

"MY DEAR HERR VON HANTEL,—

"Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 5th. The worthy Lansing seems really to have read all our despatches, though this is a matter of indifference now, since we are at war. When the war is over, all sensible people will realise, and read in recorded history, that so far as the Embassy was concerned, our one wish was to keep the peace, and restore it with other countries. I do not believe that anything could be published in America that would bring us to shame."

The man you mention is quite unknown to me. I cannot employ him here, as all correspondence to the newspapers is forbidden by the censorship. Anything of that sort we do ourselves in a house adjoining the Embassy, a proceeding that is not quite free from objection, but is adapted to the existing conditions here. When Mars no longer rules the hour we shall have to be have in this matter, too, rather more like civilised persons and Western Europeans. If you can employ the man, I am quite willing, otherwise his letter may simply remain unanswered.

"You will have read my official telegram about the Emperor's visit. That telegram contained *la vraie vérité*. It was wonderful to see how much H.M. enjoyed himself here. He often said jokingly to me and to others that he would gladly exchange with us. He is quite right, the sun, the landscape, the architecture, and

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the antiquities are really magnificent. The oriental *dessous* is naturally not observed by an exalted personage on a visit.

"You will have heard all about the political side of the visit from Kuhlmann and Rosenberg. It was a great pleasure to see them both again. Kuhlmann was extraordinarily nice and charming, quite his old self, and solved all our burdensome personal and political questions in a turn of the hand. H.M. was very good-humoured and gracious; he personally conferred on me the rank of *Wirklicher Geheimer-Rat*, observing as he did so that he had written 'Stamboul' on the patent; he also gave me a Decoration in addition, and my wife a photograph.

"Always yours,

"B."

"Constantinople. 20.11.17.

"MY DEAR HERR VON HANIEL,—

" . . . . .

"I was very pleased with the result of the crisis over the Chancellorship. We have now entered upon a period of quiet development which will bring us Parliamentary Government in a form suited to Germany. This would of course make good propaganda for America; but can you get telegrams conveyed there? If only the Prussian Franchise Bill could go through. If it does not, Hertling may soon fall. The whole entourage of the Kaiser reckoned on a period of quick changes in the Chancellorship which would last until all inner questions were solved.

"Lenin seems now to have won the day. If that is so, Czernin's peace *démarche* may be staged. I had so hoped that Czernin would stay with us quietly here or with Pallavicini; but Kaiser Karl now proposes to come on December 10th, without Czernin, who cannot be spared from the Delegations. Pallavicini, who is always pessimistic, maintains that Kaiser Karl will not come at all, owing to Jerusalem, but the old gentleman's wish is always father to his thought, and he has not been at all looking forward to the Emperor's visit.

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"By the last courier I wrote a note to Kühlmann about my friend House, because I thought that something might perhaps be done. According to the newspapers he is accompanied by two McCormicks: Cyrus and Vance. The former is the head of the Harvester Trust, as well as one of the chief trustees of Princeton and as such, a special friend of Wilson. In former days I saw a good deal of him, and, having a factory in Neuss, he was rather well disposed to Germany. The latter was Mayor of Harrisburg, played a prominent part in Pennsylvania politics, became Wilson's campaign manager, and is regarded as a coming man. Harold McCormick, who sent me his book four months ago and was much inspired by Kühlmann's policy, is the former's brother, and co-director of the Harvester Trust. He and his wife were among my best friends in America. I stayed with them in Chicago, and saw a great deal of them in New York. The wife especially, Edith Rockefeller, was very friendly to Germany, often came to Munich, learnt painting from Kaulbach, and went about a great deal in the artistic set there. I do not believe that Vance McCormick is related to the two Harvester brothers, at any rate not closely. Harold McCormick's idea is really the same as Wilson's, who himself wanted to establish the same sort of clearing house.

"The feeling here is very depressed at the moment over Jerusalem. And Supreme Headquarters is furious. Unfortunately our generals here do not get on together at all true German unity! It is difficult to find a solution of the question, as Enver cannot be ordered about, and he himself is, in fact, a really incapable commander. He ought to have a Chief of Staff who would really manage him and all the German generals here, so that they would obey orders and not work against each other. But where is such a person to be found? If General Hoffmann could be dispensed with in the East, he would be just the man, but in any case he would not be willing to sacrifice himself. In a word, the post of mediator is much more difficult

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here than it ever was in Washington and New York.

"Always yours,

"B"

I append a few letters to my nephew Albrecht Bernstorff, then Attaché in the Foreign Ministry.

"Constantinople. 12.1.18.

"MY DEAR ALBRECHT,—

" . . . . .

"The delayed arrival of the Embassy personnel is apparently due to the passport regulations of our Allies, who in this regard grow madder every day. An incredible number of profiteers of the worst kind turn up here by every Balkan train, while the people who are really wanted here have to struggle with manifold difficulties before they are allowed to start. I am glad to say that General von Lossow, who is a very energetic person, sent back one such individual who had arrived on the official train without a permit. I hope this example will serve as a *vestigia* *terrent* for his fellows. . . . .

"Marschall Liman told me recently that he might send for your brother Heini. I have not yet approached him about this because I really cannot advise anyone to come while the military situation is as bad as it is at present. Our military organisation is as bad here as it is good at home, because a *single* German officer was not appointed to take charge here and be responsible for Enver as well as our own G.H.Q. All the German generals are now at odds, and the result is—*pletuntur Achivi*. The only advantage is that the Ambassador's position is thereby raised and made easier. . . .

"In Berlin there is always a disposition to be critical, and even Bismarck was continually attacked while he was in office. The Chancellorship should have been given to a diplomat who was really acquainted with other countries. Only such a Chancellor, and one who always goes about with his resignation in his pocket, can bring us peace. Pray Heaven I am not asked to undertake

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the task! 'I thank God every morn, I am not burdened with the cares of Rome,' etc.

"Your request regarding your brother Victor came unfortunately at a very unfavourable moment. Among many other blunders, Falkenhayn was so foolish as to bring an inflated German Staff, which has now to be liquidated. As a result, German officers are now being sent home, instead of being sent here."

"Constantinople. 9.4.18

"

"Your account of conditions in Berlin is not very cheering. I have long been convinced that the economic position would decide the question of peace. The day will come when one side or the other will be unable to continue the war."

"I used to be afraid that it would be our side, which was why I was anxious to accept Wilson's peace. From here it is impossible for me to judge whether supplies from the Ukraine and the newly conquered territories will enable us to go on indefinitely. That, in my view, is the sole deciding question. It would be perilous to rely on human common sense after four years of war psychosis."

"We have been very busy here lately, partly over the redecoration of the Embassy and partly over the Turko-Bulgarian dispute.

"As regards the Turko-Bulgarian dispute, I cannot understand why this was not settled in Bucharest. It could, and should, have been settled there in one direction or the other. It was a matter of indifference which side we took, and both sides would have come to terms when they knew they would be confronted by an unalterable decision on the part of Germany. But that, alas, is a rarity these days, as the military and civil authorities are always at odds."

"Constantinople. Aug. 3rd, 1918.

" . . . . .  
 "The Berlin crisis closely affected me also. It was unusually agreeable for me to have a personal friend at the head of the Foreign Ministry. However, Kuhlmann's methods of conducting policy are out of date. There is no more steering a middle course. There must be plain and open dealings, within and without, and, in the latter regard, towards allies and neutrals as well as towards the enemy. Our allies are utterly losing confidence in us, because they do not know what we intend. How should they discover what we do not know ourselves? My specific is: complete candour at home and abroad. But an essential of that attitude is that he who directs our policy must at all times be ready to throw up his portfolio and join the opposition in the Reichstag. Kuhlmann has unfortunately made the same mistake as Bethmann. Instead of raising a question of confidence without more ado, he waited until he was thrown out.

"I hope Bussche will remain in the Wilhelmstrasse. I hope too that Hintze will pay us a visit here. Something must positively be done to bring our allies into line again. I am very glad that that able and extraordinarily pleasant fellow Vietinghoff is to be brought into such close contact with the Secretary of State.

" . . . . ."

The above letter to my nephew refers to Kuhlmann's replacement by Hintze as Secretary of State. So I here append my last private letters to Kuhlmann.

"Therapia. 6.7.18.

"DEAR KUHLMANN,—

"I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 30th, in which you kindly give me your comments on some remarks of the Ambassador, Edhem Bey. These do not surprise me in the least; we are well accustomed here to such threats of a separate peace. They are to be regarded in the light of blackmail. This method is used by the leading men here, as Talaat, Enver,

and Halil keep on assuring us that they are the true pillars of the alliance, and that we ought to secure them political advantages and help them to justify their policy of alliance and maintain their positions. There is some truth in the deduction that the said gentlemen are too deeply compromised with us to inspire any confidence in the enemy.

'Though I previously thought an Anglo-Turkish peace out of the question because England could not pay the necessary price, my view has rather changed as a result of the complete collapse of Russia and the developments in the Caucasus. If England to-day attaches sufficient importance to a separate peace with the Turks—and that is the real question—the British statesmen have only to offer the Turks the whole of the Caucasus, Northern Persia, the nominal sovereignty in the Arabian territories, and a large sum of money. On these terms they could have a separate peace any day. The moral impression produced by such a break up of the quadruple alliance would, since it would mean the end of our Oriental policy of thirty years, naturally be very great. On the other hand, we should, from a military point of view, actually gain by such a separate peace, as Turkey with her vast demands is merely a burden to us. We could therefore contemplate such a separate peace with complete composure, and promptly neutralise its effects by telling our friends here that they had certainly better make peace if they could get such favourable terms. However, it is not for me to decide on the great questions of high policy, as one can only get a one-sided view of affairs from the periphery. For the decision of so important a question there are here many data lacking that can only be at the disposal of those at the centre point. But I think it essential that the above possibilities should be taken into account when decisions are taken in Berlin. This was done in connection with the negotiations in Batum. You know from my telegrams that I was not at all in agreement with what there took place. Our people there pursued a policy of force without

a backing of force, and then expected their blunders to be made good in Constantinople. That is much easier said than done. The Turk's strongest weapon is passive resistance, and he always uses it when things go wrong. We had enough of this with Falkenhayn. We can talk and protest and give orders here just as much as we like, but it produces no result in the Caucasus, and Kress has not the power to enforce our will. The policy inaugurated by our military men could only have been justified if we had had at least a German Army Corps to throw into the Caucasus. As this is not possible, our policy hitherto can only lead either to a rather inglorious German withdrawal, which could indeed be explained and palliated as due to misunderstandings, or to a serious disruption of the Turko-German alliance. I should not be at all averse to the latter, but I cannot share the enthusiasm for the Caucasus tribes, as these people seem no better nor more reliable than the Turks. It is not to be denied that our military men from the very first moment backed up the Caucasians against the Turks. What result that was intended to produce I have never realised. However, nothing can be done about it now. Even to-day we should do better by showing ourselves more accommodating to the Turks, and demanding concessions in compensation. Otherwise the affair may lead to consequences that will be unpleasant to us, and for which I shall be made responsible into the bargain. Since the beginning of the Caucasus question I have often thought that the result of all this would be what happened to me in America—namely, that I should be made responsible for a policy that I had disapproved from the outset.

“B.”

“*Therapia.* 12.7.18.

“MY DEAR KUHLMANN,—

“It is with a heavy heart that I write you these few lines to say how very sorry I am that you have resigned the post in

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which, in spite of endless difficulties, you have achieved such great success and brought us nearer to the end of this dreadful war. As you know, I only came here out of regard for our old friendship, as I had had enough of the diplomatic career after my experiences in Washington. But when you were appointed to the Foreign Ministry, I thought I should be able to establish a relation of mutual confidence with those in authority, without which the tenure of a diplomatic post is impossible. How I shall now get on with Berlin the future alone can show. I look forward to the issue with complete composure, as I cannot go through worse experiences than I did at Washington.

'When I was discussing your resignation with the Bulgarian Minister here, he said that you would certainly be recalled as soon as we were really determined to make peace. I agree. I hope it will prove a correct prophecy.

"With warmest regards from your old friend,

'B'

The first observation in the following letter to my friend Bussche refers to the fact that Kühlmann had telegraphed to me to go to Bucharest and conduct peace negotiations with Rumania. This order was then countermanded. Both the order and its withdrawal were, I believe, the results of the various phases of Kühlmann's conflict with the Supreme Army Command.

"Constantinople. 23.2.18

'MY DEAR BUSSCHE,—

'I had nearly started for Bucharest to-day. The business would have interested me very much, though it would have been rather difficult for me in one way, as my Turkish friends would have been at me all the time to save Costanza for Rumania.

'The object of my present letter is to send you the following strictly confidential piece of news. I had luncheon yesterday with Nessmy and afterwards I had a long talk with him, he

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told me plainly that the quadruple alliance could have had peace with Russia had our demands been less. It had been Trotsky's policy to maintain the unity of Russia, and to this end he would have been ready to surrender certain territories. But he could not have sanctioned with his signature any dismemberment of Russia. Nessimy went on to say that he was telling this exclusively to *me*, because he knew I was a friend of Kuhlmann's, who had himself wanted to make a moderate peace with Russia. I fancy, however, that the Turkish peace negotiators are here suggesting that it was the fault of our military party that the peace with Russia did not eventuate. I would write this to Kuhlmann myself were he not on the move at this very moment. Anyhow, it would be no news to him. Nessimy believes that for the above-mentioned reasons Trotsky will not now conclude a peace, because our ultimatum demands the recognition of the independence of the Ukraine.

" . . . . .

"B."

Two more letters to Bussche.

"Constantinople. 2.3.18.

"MY DEAR BUSSCHE,—

" . . . . .

"I would like to make a few observations on matters not suitable for an official report.

"Since the arrival of that admirable officer General von Seeckt, the military organisation has entirely altered. Seeckt is not merely able, he is ready to take everything into his own hands. Now that Falkenhayn has been recalled and Liman has gone off to Nazareth, Seeckt is in complete control of the situation, especially as he gets on excellently with Enver Pasha and knows how to handle him.

"At the same time, a new representative of the War Ministry has now appeared in the person of Major Meyer, who is taking

charge of all questions of military supply, which have been getting rather involved lately for various reasons, having been dealt with by semi military persons only

"These various changes have rather circumscribed the position of our military plenipotentiary, as it was he who had hitherto dealt with Enver and handled the question of military supplies. I don't really know what will happen when General von Lossow returns, and should not be surprised if he applied to be sent to the German front. As you know from my reports, I have a great regard for General von Lossow, both as a member of the Embassy and in our official relations, as he is free from the usual militarism and stands up boldly to the Supreme Command. But I cannot imagine that he will long remain content with the state of affairs here, although it is, in fact, much improved. The plain truth is that there is almost nothing left to do for a General attached to the Embassy. I mention this because I lately heard that there is some apprehension at the Foreign Ministry over Lossow's long absence. My relations with General von Seeckt are very pleasant, and he discusses with me matters that trench on the political sphere with complete candour and loyalty. However, he can hardly be very pleased at the intrusion of a military plenipotentiary

"B"

"Constantinople. 15.3.18

"MY DEAR BUSSCHE,—

"As regards high policy in the first instance, I really cannot blame the Turks for taking what they can get. Their Caucasian policy was supported by Supreme Headquarters at the outset, and now the latter suddenly accuse the Turks of being responsible for everything. It is naturally much more difficult for the Turks to withdraw now than it would have been had they not made an advance to begin with. As you know, I am very much against

being too accommodating to the Turks on all occasions. On the contrary, I represent the view that we should pursue a *do ut des* policy. But it is essential that we should for that purpose first know what we want, and make it clear and unmistakable to the Turks. If the military go on making promises, and then deny that they ever made them, it is not easy to formulate a policy here. 'Before dinner it read differently,' says someone in *Wallenstein*. . . . .

"So I am at the moment greatly troubled over political doings here. The negotiations in Batum were carried on with quite abnormal clumsiness. It is strange how few people can learn that in Turkey the form is more important than the content. Everything can be attained in time here, provided the right form is adopted, but if that is wanting, failure is inevitable. . . . .

"Here we are again brought up against the riddle of personality, which plays the chief part in Turkey. I always call attention to this problem in my reports. One man achieves something with the Turks, another can do nothing with them. We must face this fact, though we may also recognise that the German officials or officers in question may be quite blameless. . . . .

"Warmest greetings from all of us to you and yours,

"B."

Here follow four letters to Ferdinand Stumm, who had been my colleague at Washington, and was then Director of the Press Section at the Foreign Ministry.

"Constantinople. 29.12.17.

"DEAR HERR VON STUMM,—

" . . . . .

"As you have now definitely taken up work in the Foreign Ministry, I most heartily wish you luck.

"In my opinion your present Department in the Ministry has indulged in too much propaganda hitherto. It would seem

charge of all questions of military supply, which have been getting rather involved lately for various reasons, having been dealt with by semi military persons only

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being too accommodating to the Turks on all occasions. On the contrary, I represent the view that we should pursue a *do ut des* policy. But it is essential that we should for that purpose first know what we want, and make it clear and unmistakable to the Turks. If the military go on making promises, and then deny that they ever made them, it is not easy to formulate a policy here. 'Before dinner it read differently,' says someone in *Wallenstein*. . . . .

"So I am at the moment greatly troubled over political doings here. The negotiations in Batum were carried on with quite abnormal clumsiness. It is strange how few people can learn that in Turkey the form is more important than the content. Everything can be attained in time here, provided the right form is adopted, but if that is wanting, failure is inevitable. . . . .

"Here we are again brought up against the riddle of personality, which plays the chief part in Turkey. I always call attention to this problem in my reports. One man achieves something with the Turks, another can do nothing with them. We must face this fact, though we may also recognise that the German officials or officers in question may be quite blameless. . . . .

"Warmest greetings from all of us to you and yours,

"B."

Here follow four letters to Ferdinand Stumm, who had been my colleague at Washington, and was then Director of the Press Section at the Foreign Ministry.

"Constantinople. 29.12.17.

"DEAR HERR VON STUMM,—

" . . . . .

"As you have now definitely taken up work in the Foreign Ministry, I most heartily wish you luck.

"In my opinion your present Department in the Ministry has indulged in too much propaganda hitherto. It would seem

that money is to be picked up in the street in Germany; otherwise, no one is likely to have the notion of sending an opera here, the effect of which as propaganda would have been *nil*, since it would only have appealed to the population of Pera and not the Turks at all, quite apart from the fact that there are no facilities here for producing a first class opera at all. If propaganda is to be carried on in Turkey it must be directed towards administrative, economic, sanitary and educational affairs, in other words, the administration of the country, together with the economic condition of the lower classes, must be improved by our agency, to which end Education will be a help, and hospitals must form the hygienic basis of our efforts. If we apply our energies in these directions, Turkey can be regenerated, and we shall be able to control the country economically to our own advantage. But when peace comes the military element must be practically eliminated.

"We really seem near to a peace with Russia. As for the rumours about a separate peace by Turkey, that is merely the old dodge. England will never hand Arabia over to the Turks to relieve us of an ally who is, at the moment, nothing but a burden to us. Moreover, since the Black Sea is open again, and the Russians have to withdraw their forces behind their original frontiers, the Turks are quite happy again

"

"B."

"Constantinople. 19.1.18.

"DEAR HERR STUMM,—

"The theatrical undertaking has been handed over, with financial loss, to a local society. The whole affair dates from before your time, and I would not bother you with it all except that Alexander Pangiri and Ismail Hakkı are starting for Berlin to-day and will probably bore you about it a good deal. I would recommend that it should be set aside as purely a matter of

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theatrical business, so that the Foreign Ministry should for the future have as little to do with it as possible; otherwise an increasing crowd of dubious intriguers will attach themselves to the Embassy and merely bring discredit on us. You know what society is like here, and matters grow worse every day; war profiteers are springing up like mushrooms, and speculation assumes American dimensions.

"We lived for some time here in complete ignorance of the fact that a serious crisis had broken out in Berlin. When it finally became known, it produced a deep depression here and a good deal of ill-feeling against us. The people here were very keen on peace with Russia, and already reckoned on it as an accomplished fact. If the Grand Vizier had not unfortunately gone to Brest-Litovsk, the situation would have been less unpleasant. As it is, he will come in for a good deal of odium if he has to return without the peace. A strong opposition against the Talaat Ministry has gradually arisen both in Parliament and in Committee, and that not on political grounds but owing to the prevalent corruption, which has aroused a general feeling of bitterness. All the money that came from Germany or was available in the country has found its way into a few hands, while the great mass of the population is impoverished or actually starving. I hope, with you, that a peace with the Ukraine will save the situation.

" . . . . .

"B."

"Constantinople. Feb. 2nd, 1918.

"MY DEAR HERR VON STUMM,—

"As to the theatre, the primary question, which I cannot answer from here, is how far it is intended to carry on the so-called culture propaganda here after the war. A theatre will be constructed in the *Freundschaftshaus*, which could be employed for this purpose, if that building is ever finished. From the financial point of view the prospects seem to be good, as Jackh

maintains that he can get all the money he wants from Bosch. But until then a great deal more water will flow from the Black Sea into Marmora. If in the meantime there are to be further efforts in this direction independently of the *Freundschaftshaus*, it would in any case be desirable to help the Ucto, for the existing barn that is described as a theatre destroys any atmosphere conducive to aesthetic enjoyment. Joseph Schwarz is really a great artist, but his concerts give the impression of utter failure owing to the environment and insufficient advertisement. Moreover, the public here is not used to anything good and must first be educated. In this regard a decent theatre would mean a great step forward. The Ucto would thus get the start needed to kill all competitors. We should thenceforward have a strong claim on it, and should not allow ourselves to be bullied financially. The latter is the usual intention of the profiteers here. Briefly, the decision depends solely on how much the Ucto demands, and whether we are prepared to contribute so much money.

'High politics are in a truly unsatisfactory state. I do not feel at all confident that we shall secure a peace with Russia. And now Finland and the Ukraine have succumbed to Bolshevism. I am afraid that Trotsky attaches more importance to the Social Revolution than to peace. It is to be hoped that the armistice may at least continue, as otherwise our Allies will become unreliable.'

"*Therapia*, 13718.

"MY DEAR HERR VON STUMM,—

"

"I naturally greatly regret the change in the Foreign Ministry. Quite apart from the political side of the question, it distresses me to lose a personal friend at the Foreign Ministry. As matters stand at present, the new master is not likely to achieve much either."

"Herr von Hintze will at first have enough to do to bring our

## CONSTANTINOPLE

allies back into line. Our sudden change of front on the Caucasian question has involved us in much trouble here, especially as we already had the Bulgarian question heavily on our hands. Being allied to the Turks, it is not easy for us to tell them that we consider them politically inferior and unworthy of any acquisition of territory. Our line ought to be to associate ourselves with the Turks politically, and demand economic compensations for so doing. Such a policy is not merely necessary because it is dictated by good sense, but because we are not in a position to pursue any other. If we press the Turks politically, they will take refuge in passive resistance, and everything will go wrong; while, on the other hand, they themselves realise that their economic prosperity depends on us.

"B."

I mentioned above that the Kaiser paid a visit to the war cemetery in the Embassy garden. In this connection I wrote to Stresemann, with whom I was already on very good terms.

"Constantinople. 19.3.18.

"DEAR HERR DR. STRESEMANN,—

" . . . . .

"I have long been anxious to write to you, but I kept on putting it off, as I knew that you, like myself, were overburdened with work and would not be much disposed to read any academic observations on politics. However, I have followed your activities with great interest, and I am specially glad that you are now saving universal suffrage in Prussia and with it the entire situation.

"I determined to write to you to-day because I heard that you had interested yourself in that unlucky business of the war cemetery in the Embassy garden at Therapia. Humann left me this legacy, as of course he can no longer deal with the affair.

"On May 1st the cemetery is to be closed, because it was impossible for burials to take place in the park indefinitely.

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"Therapia. 13.7.18

"MY DEAR HERR VON STURM,—

"I naturally greatly regret the change in the Foreign Ministry. Quite apart from the political side of the question, it distresses me to lose a personal friend at the Foreign Ministry. As matters stand at present the new master is not likely to achieve much either.

"Herr von Hintze will at first have enough to do to bring our

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"On May 1st the cemetery is to be closed, because it was impossible for burials to take place in the park indefinitely.

As there was a heavy deficit to be met, before Humann went away he was unfortunately incautious enough to ask the War Minister for a subsidy. This gave the latter an opportunity of interfering in an affair that really did not concern him, because the money for the purpose had hitherto been contributed privately, and the park was under my control—or, at most, under that of the Foreign Ministry. Now Herr von Stein asks for a fresh design, which will mean a great waste of time, quite apart from the fact that Kolbe will certainly not be in a position to work according to the rules of Official Prussian Art. I am told that you too have interested yourself in Kolbe. To put an end to an unpleasant situation we must therefore—

'1 Raise money and

'2 The War Minister must resign any claim to interfere.

' The latter is not an unjustified demand, as the affair only concerns the War Minister if he has to contribute money. I put the matter before Baron Bussche because the Secretary of State has no time for such matters. I myself and all the people concerned think the present design a very fine one. When Baron Bussche has taken charge of the matter, only the financial side of the question will remain to be settled. In this connection you have been most helpful in the past. Perhaps there might be some war profiteer who would come down with a further contribution. Perhaps, too, the War Minister will withdraw his objection to Kolbe's design.

As I said, I would not have troubled you with this letter if I had not heard that you were a chief supporter of the first and very fine design. At that time no one imagined that we should be keeping a large army here, and a fleet and hospitals, etc., over several years. As a result, there were of course many deaths that might well have been regarded as having occurred on the field of honour, but hardly justifying burial in the 'Heroes Cemetery' of the German Embassy. I had the impression that H.M., too, felt that the extension of the thing was rather exaggerated. Please

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don't move any further in the matter if you don't feel inclined. A certain discretion will no doubt be needed, as official quarters are excessively sensitive to any outside influence. . . .

"B."

*"Berlin. March 27th, 1918.*

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

"I was greatly interested in what you wrote to me about the cemetery in the Embassy Park at Therapia. In view of what you say, when I come back from a short holiday I will at once get into touch with Herr von dem Bussche and try to get the War Minister side-tracked out of the affair. As I have already informed you by telegram, there is a sum of about twenty-five thousand marks with the firm of Arnhold Brothers in Dresden which I had collected for this cemetery at Therapia. Would you kindly let me know whether this will be enough to clear the matter up? If not, and if the sum needed is not too large, I will try to make it up from private contributions. Herr Humann has in the meantime come back to Berlin, and I will get into touch with him at once, as he may be able to give me some further information on the subject.

"I very greatly regret that the War Minister does not like Kolbe's design. I had, in fact, commended Kolbe to the War Minister at Herr Humann's suggestion. Could you send me a little information regarding Kolbe, and perhaps a drawing? I would then have a talk with Herr von Stein. He is indeed a somewhat opinionated gentleman, and will not be easily brought to alter his views.

"I am dictating these lines on a journey after my election, and would therefore ask you to excuse my telegraphese. As soon as I can get a little breathing space I will gladly write you in detail, and I would ask you in the meantime to let me have any further information about the financial side of the matter.

"Pray accept my best thanks for what you so kindly say about

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

my political activity I regard the Franchise question in Prussia as settled in this sense, and I hope that this may bring us peace in our internal affairs. If the advance of our armies can secure our political and economic future, we may cheerfully face any developments to come.

"With sincere good wishes for your success in the representation of German interests on the Bosphorus, I am, etc.,

"STRESEMANN'

'Constantinople. 9.4.18

"DEAR HERR STRESEMANN,—

"Thank you very much for your kind letter of the 27th of March and for the money. Unfortunately the deficit still amounts to about 70,000 marks

"Under Secretary of State v. d. Bussche is fully informed of the whole situation. Kolbe's several designs are before him, and the War Minister will of course have seen them too. Kolbe is undeniably a very important artist, but, of course a very modern one. The allegory which the War Minister has condemned is, in any case, the best design, partly for the reason that the cemetery is not a purely military one. The Navy wants the statue of a sailor. But in this way we shall never get finished, so I plead most earnestly for the allegory

"The Turko-Bulgarian dispute is extremely unpleasant. In my opinion our authorities should make up their minds to come down on the side of one ally or the other. Then we must kindly but firmly put pressure on the one who is to yield.

"Neither of them can do us any damage since the Russian collapse.

"With warmest good wishes, etc.,

J. BERNSTORFF'

By way of conclusion to the chapter on Constantinople I

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append a letter to my faithful Washington colleague, Alexander Fuehr, whose name was so often mentioned in my first book. He was then working at Geneva for our Berne Legation.

*"Constantinople. 15.6.18.*

"MY DEAR FUEHR,—

" . . . . .

"I have the impression that our activity in Switzerland is rather excessive. Such a crowd of people can hardly be needed there. The reports we get from Berne are mostly not worth the paper on which they are written. We still seem to take the view that propaganda, as understood among us, is profitable. Certain things are not suitable for export, as for instance U-boat films, which even here lead to counter-demonstrations. If we had been allowed to carry on propaganda in America from the start, as we have done here on a small scale during the last twelve months, there would perhaps have been no war. The time for such speculations is unfortunately past, but it would be a good thing if we could learn from the history of our propaganda. More and more Germans are being sent here, whereas I take the view that if the number of our countrymen here were halved, the improvement in our mutual relations would be doubled.

"There is always a great deal of work here. Fresh questions are always cropping up before the old ones are settled. Six months ago we had only the Bulgarian affair. Now there is the Caucasian problem, not to mention the Arabian and Jewish questions, etc. And, as the Americans say, we have a finger in every pie. Not a sparrow falls from the roof in Turkey without at least the passive co-operation of the German Ambassador.

"Yours, etc.,

"B."

## CHAPTER V

### REICHSTAG

THE end of my service at Constantinople was also the end of my diplomatic career. On October 3rd I had a telephone call from Vietinghoff, whom I have already mentioned, to ask me, on Hintze's instructions, whether I was prepared to succeed the latter as Secretary of State. I replied that I must first know under what Chancellor I should have to serve and what policy would be pursued. As to this, Vietinghoff could give me no answer, and next day he again telephoned with the news that Prince Max of Baden had been appointed Chancellor and Solf Secretary of State. I was very glad to hear of this arrangement, as I should, out of an old regard for Prince Max, have accepted the post of Secretary of State under him, and should thus have fallen into all the conflicts of conscience and collisions of duties with which I shall deal in due course. I therefore remained for the time in Constantinople, while the correspondence with Wilson, over which I was not consulted, took its course. However I was not much distressed about this, as will be seen from the following letter to Solf and his answer

"Constantinople. 14.10.18.

"DEAR SECRETARY SOLF." TE.—

With my warmest wishes for good luck  
and thankless task which you have  
forget that you were among the few  
I come on my return from America,  
now—also—all has turned out as I  
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foretold. I would have been much better pleased if subsequent events had proved me in the wrong.

"If I can be of any service to you through my old personal friendship with House, who is Wilson's confidant, I am entirely at your disposal, not only as an official, but as a private person.

"Always yours, etc.,

"J. BERNSTORFF."

*"Berlin. Oct. 23rd, 1918.*

"DEAR AMBASSADOR,—

" . . . . .

"Pray accept my warmest thanks for your kind letter of the 14th. I like to think that we have so many principles and ideas in common, and should welcome any prospect of working with you. I would have gladly summoned you here for the benefit of your advice and help, but Constantinople is too far away, and too important at the moment.

"With best wishes, etc.,

"SOLF."

I could not however refrain from sending the Chancellor the following telegram:

"As I am the only living German who knows Wilson personally, I would like to observe that it would be useless to appeal to him if we are not prepared at once to abandon the unrestricted U-boat war, as he feels this measure as a personal offence."

Whether as a result of this telegram or of the general political situation at home and abroad I cannot say, but in any case I received instructions from the Chancellor to present myself at Berlin with all practicable speed. In one respect I was glad to get this order, as it preserved me from falling into the hands of our

enemies, but, on the other hand, it was none too easy to obey, as we in Constantinople did not really know which routes were still open. There had latterly been air attacks on Constantinople. I particularly remember one of them, which was clearly visible from my study window at the Embassy. The Khedive of Egypt, who had been banished from Egypt by the English and was living in exile on the Bosphorus, was calling on me when the attack took place. Since I had been accredited to the Khedive, my relations with him had been very friendly and they always remained so.

I decided to take with me my best Constantinople colleague, Secretary of Legation—now Ministerialdirektor—Dieckhoff, and make for Costanza one evening in a torpedo boat. Anyone who has never been on the Black Sea in a torpedo boat can have no conception of that extremely unpleasant experience. I was sea sick for the first time in my life, though I have crossed the Atlantic sixteen times and the Channel and the North Sea almost as often. Moreover, the torpedo boat was an old vessel which we had captured from the Russians at Odessa. However, the little material troubles of life come to an end at last, and we landed next day safe and sound at Costanza, where we lunched at the German Officers Club and ate some excellent sturgeon. As soon as we could get to a railway we went on to Bucharest. Rumania was still firmly in the grip of German troops. Only once did we see any signs of war, when we had to walk across a temporary bridge, as the railway bridge had been destroyed. However, we reached Bucharest late in the evening, not much the worse, where I found Alfred Horstmann an old Washington friend, representing the Foreign Ministry; he met us at the station and took us to his house. He had a few guests with him, which rather embarrassed Dieckhoff and myself, as we had never been in a more unsuitable condition to enter a drawing room. Our appearance can be imagined after more than twenty four hours of such a journey. We stayed at Bucharest until the following

evening and lunched at the German Officers' Club with Field-Marshal von Mackensen, with whom I had a very good talk. He displayed an understanding of the political side of the war and of high policy as a whole such as I had found in no other of our eminent generals with the exception of Seeckt. The continuation of our journey to Berlin was a very uncertain undertaking; on our way through Budapest we heard a good deal of shooting in the streets, but we were allowed to proceed unmolested; I reached the Hotel Adlon in Berlin on the evening of October 31st, and was able to report to Prince Max and Solf on the following day. I took a long walk with the former in the lovely garden of the Chancellery, and continued to do so twice every day until the revolution. The old trees of that garden have "looked upon so many a storm." My readers will certainly remember Bismarck's observation; and what he never forgave Caprivi was having one of those trees cut down. For Prince Max my feelings were not merely those of friendship but of deepest sympathy. If he had taken up his office a year before, he would, with his idealism, have been the right man to secure a reasonable peace. He would have inspired confidence abroad and in the German Left. The Peace Treaties of Brest-Litovsk would have been differently framed, and the way to further negotiations would have remained open. But now the glorious army, which had protected our fatherland from the enemy, had been defeated by superior numbers. The blunders of the Reich Government had brought their consequences. There was but one task immediately before us, and that was to save the monarchy, not merely for reasons of principle, for history is neither monarchical nor republican but revolutionary; but it was our duty to save the monarchy, because there was no other way of securing for the German nation an organised and appropriate representation in the face of the enemy. A revolution, on the other hand, must paralyse Germany in her hour of greatest peril. This, indeed, was what the Chancellor discussed with me quite candidly and confidentially on our daily

walks, after he had told me that it was for this purpose he had got me back from Constantinople. I realised at once that we both wanted to save the monarchy, and the only question was how our common object could be reached, as the situation was a very difficult one. This confidential relation unfortunately only lasted nine days until the outbreak of the revolution, though it dated from our very first meeting, when the Prince begged me to treat him with entire frankness. The Chancellor began by asking me whether I had understood Wilson's Note as meaning that the Kaiser's abdication was essential. This question I had to answer in the affirmative. The second was. Who should tell the Kaiser?—to which I replied. 'You must.' The Prince shook his head and categorically refused, saying: 'As heir to the throne of Baden and a German Prince I can't do such a thing', upon which I promptly replied. 'In that case you should not have become Chancellor.' This candour, to which he was apparently not accustomed, obviously pleased the Prince, for on the very first day he asked me to stay in Berlin, as I could not go back to Constantinople. He would find a place for me in the Foreign Ministry. That first interview in the garden of the Chancellery began an untenable situation which did not end until I landed on a seat in the Reichstag, at which I had been aiming since the hour I left Constantinople. I did not want to abandon Prince Max, who had turned to me with so much confidence, but, like Archimedes, I had no *locus standi*, from which I could lift any thing, much less a world, off its hinges. Prince Max was not a man of strong will, and his health was not equal to the post of Chancellor at such a difficult time. He could only sleep by the aid of strong narcotics, which reminded me of an anecdote of Bismarck. He was pressing Friedrich Wilhelm IV rather hard on one occasion, when the Queen came into the room and said.

'Don't torment the King so, he did not sleep last night.' Bismarck merely replied. 'It is a King's business to sleep.'

Prince Max's Recollections give a good and just account of the

last days before the revolution, of which I was a witness. I have only a few details to add, which may throw a little more light on the Chancellor's efforts to save the monarchy. It is not mentioned in the *Recollections* that Prince Max sent me to Scheidemann, with whom I discussed the question in a long interview. He was as anxious as I was to prevent the revolution, but at the same time he laid great stress on the fact that his Party was not yet capable of governing and must first learn to do so. In this regard he was only too right, though that incapacity is more of a national failing than the infirmity of a Party. Our late enemies, however, must also bear the responsibility for the failure of the German Republic. In any case, Scheidemann did then sincerely desire to see a constitutional monarchy. He was by no means aiming at a revolution, but he demanded the Kaiser's resignation in favour of his grandson as a *conditio sine qua non* for the salvation of the monarchy, which he then more or less guaranteed. Almost everyone in Berlin at that time, who had any acquaintance with affairs at home and abroad, agreed with Scheidemann's view. But the revolution could only have been avoided by a *timely* abdication of the Kaiser. Prince Max realised this quite clearly, but the Sovereign unfortunately did not. If the Kaiser had abdicated in good time, his grandson would have been on the throne to-day. Immediately after my interview with Scheidemann, at the Chancellor's request I also went to see Clemens Delbrück, then head of the Civil Cabinet, but he gave me no hope that the Kaiser would abdicate. When he did so, on November 9th, it was too late to prevent the revolution. Too late! These words are written up at the outbreak of almost all revolutions in history, and yet monarchs have never learnt their lesson. As regards November 9th, I have very little to add to the *Recollections* of Prince Max. When the new Chancellor, Friedrich Ebert, with the rest of those present, took leave of Prince Max, he and I were left alone in his study. Then he told me that the Ministers of the various States were waiting

for him in another room, and he now proposed to consult them as to whether he should attempt to restore order in the capacity of Vice Regent of the Empire. But he would not accept such an office without the agreement of the German Princes. I did my best to persuade him to do so, as he records in his *Recollections*, without mentioning me by name. Then he asked me to go with him to the interview. I cannot recall who were present. The only thing I can remember is that the Bavarian Minister, Count Lerchenfeld, was just as insistent as I had been that the Prince should act accordingly. He saw in the Vice Regency the last chance of averting revolution. At the melancholy last luncheon at the Chancellery, to which the Chancellor and I sat down alone, I again pressed him to make the attempt. The final act in the tragedy is represented by the Prince's farewell visit to Ebert, described in the *Recollections*, at which Ebert, too, expressed himself in favour of a Vice Regency. But the Prince was no longer willing to make the attempt. His main motive was his reverence for the Kaiser whose commands he had not received. Perhaps, indeed, it was too late. However, the country's need was such that the attempt should have been made. I cannot too often emphasise the fact that the representation of Germany for international purposes, situated as it is in the heart of the continent, exercises a decisive influence on the settlement of all other questions. It can hardly be conceived what a difference it would have made to Germany and the world if our enemies at Versailles had not been able to commit, unresisted, every folly that came into their minds. I append four later letters from Prince Max, which throw light on the above questions. Only the last treats of the formation of a new large Central Party.

‘Salem in Baden. June 7th, 1922.

“DEAR COUNT,—

‘I have only seen an extract from *Democratic Germany* in

REICHSSTAG

the *Berliner Tageblatt*, but I should like to thank you at once for the understanding way in which you have treated the subject. It becomes more and more clear to me that history will reproach me with not having pressed the Kaiser's abdication with sufficient ruthlessness. None the less, it ought not, I think, to be forgotten that the Kaiser's flight to General Headquarters represented the first revolutionary step, and almost precluded a statesmanlike solution.

"I have collected a great deal of new information from all manner of personal and written accounts of the critical time, and it is indeed a dreadful thought that the announcement of the abdication in the morning newspapers of the 9th would in all probability have prevented the outbreak of the revolution. Once we had got over the 9th November, the armistice conditions then put forward would have created a quite new situation; the German nation would have turned to face the enemy in undivided wrath, and if fighting was no longer possible, there was still the resource of moral self-defence.

" . . . . .

"It would give me great pleasure to see you again, and talk over past and present days.

"With best wishes—

"MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN."

"Salem. June 17th, 1922.

"MY DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

" . . . . .

"I hear confidentially from the former War Minister, Scheuch, that Nowak, the author, has a book coming out shortly in which he gives an account of the order forbidding the troops to shoot on Nov. 9th, which does not agree with my and General Scheuch's recollection. Nowak is said to have appealed to your testimony. He proposes to visit here on the 26th, to get me to go over his manuscript. I would be most obliged if you would let me have,

before that date, a brief account of your recollection of the episode in question. I expressly refrain from giving you my own recollection, so that yours may be quite uninfluenced

"I would also remark that Scheuch lays great stress on the fact that Nowak should not learn of my previous attitude through him. I have indeed the impression that much caution is desirable in dealing with this talented journalist.

"After reading your comprehensive article, I am more anxious than ever to have a talk with you as soon as possible about the past. Perhaps there may be an opportunity for us to meet in Munich when I visit Gmunden in the late summer. And it would of course give me great pleasure to welcome you at Salem.

"With the warmest thanks for your kind letter and your good wishes, which I greatly value,

"Yours, etc.,

"MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN"

"Salem. December 3rd, 1922.

"MY DEAR COUNT,—

"Thank you very much for sending me the extract from Friedrich Rudolf Zenker's wretched book. The affair is so silly and absurd that I almost think General Gröner is doing the man too much honour by prosecuting him. In a recent similar case, after consulting the President of the Supreme Court, Simons, I refused to prosecute. I wrote as follows:

"In reply to your enquiry of the 21st, I beg to state that I do not propose to bring any action regarding the article entitled "Das Ehrhardtlied" in Nr 37 of the *Sächsische Landeszeitung*. If I prosecuted every publication that abused me personally instead of combating my policy, I should have no time for anything else. I think to defend my policy before another tribunal

"I read an extract from your article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. It was a great satisfaction to me to read so convincing and powerful a defence of the line then taken, which was also yours, and was the only possible salvation of the monarchy. I shall be very glad to have an opportunity of reading the whole article in *Demokratische Deutschland*, and thank you in advance for it.

"With all good wishes, etc.,

"MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN."

"Salem. 8.9.26.

"MY DEAR COUNT,—

" . . . . .

"I am glad to be able to say that I entirely agree with your proposals. The necessity of preserving the structure of the State from such shocks must be clear to everyone who has eyes to see the amount of explosive still existing among the masses, and how great is the danger that, in the face of a fresh upheaval, it may no longer be possible to lead the orderly elements to victory over the Bolshevikistic greed for power. I have just lately received some very interesting information about this, and I agree that the idea of creating a central Block that shall be stable enough to control any Coalition, whether leaning to the Right or Left, is the sole solution with any prospect of success.

"I have long held similar views. The problem seems to me to be to split the Catholics, so as to induce a section of the Centre, which would not be disposed to co-operate with Wirth's Proletarian Party, to join the Middle Block. For this purpose it is essential that nothing should be done to alarm the Centre, and I think it should be considered whether a Party title that contains the word 'Liberal' might not suggest memories of the *Kulturkampf*. I once hoped that the occupation of the Ruhr would weld the nation together, and I said at the time in a speech that the new Party of Unity should be called the National-Christian Party, so that the representation of the Christian idea

should not be left to the Centre, nor the National idea to the German Nationals.

"I have been expecting that this great Party would materialise, and your letter has filled me with the hope that it is perhaps at last on its way

"Yours, etc.,

"MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN

The ninth of November was succeeded by some very gloomy days. There was a state of complete anarchy, which was only gradually suppressed. For the orderly German nation this was a strange experience, which was not without influence on the subsequent course of events. For months to come there was shooting in the streets of Berlin. When I went from the Adlon Hotel to the Foreign Ministry I had to keep close to the houses Prince and Princess Bülow were living in the same hotel, but they soon moved from the centre of the city to get more quiet. My wife had joined me again in Berlin, after the collapse of Turkey had inevitably separated us for a time. We occupied rooms with windows looking on to the courtyard, while the Bülows rooms had a view of the Pariser Platz. Our rooms were naturally very dark in November, and when the Bülows departed my wife thought she would like to take theirs, and we accordingly went to inspect them in the company of Herr Louis Adlon. We were all three standing in the middle of the room when a bullet came through the window and smashed the mirror above the fireplace. After this experience my wife preferred to remain in our rooms on the courtyard.

Two memories of those days remain particularly in my mind, first, the day on which the victims of the revolutionary fighting were buried, when the red flag was hoisted for two hours over the dignified building of the Foreign Ministry, during which time all the officials left the place on a strike of protest. This was the first and only time in my life when I took part in a strike.

Secondly, the day on which the Communists, who were then called Spartakists, tried to gain control of the city and the government, and heavily armed men stood at both ends of the Wilhelmstrasse, while the Government, having no troops at its disposal, called the whole Social-Democratic Party out into the streets.

The Wilhelmstrasse was black with people, among whom were many women, and they all stood, a serried array of heads, without a weapon among them, from Unter den Linden as far as the Leipziger Strasse: an imposing spectacle. The German is not really a revolutionary, though in politics he is inclined to fall a victim to adventurers and charlatans.

The Spartakists did not shoot, and it was because they did not that Germany was not fated to become a Soviet Republic. All of us who went through that time were involved in daily conflicts of spirit and conscience. The Soviets at that time sent out a great many wireless messages, which were addressed to Haase, the People's Commissary, and these were read in the Foreign Ministry. One of these messages made a great impression on my mind. It ran as follows: "If you wish to make the revolution complete, you must get rid of all the old officials. If these remain, the revolution will fail."

I had never realised so clearly that the duty of all officials was to remain at their posts, to restore order as soon as possible, and not to give way to force until we had achieved this object. The fact that the Kaiser had released us from our oaths did not decide the question before the bar of history. The question to be decided was: Where lies salvation for the nation and the Fatherland? At that time I had no doubt that a Republic was the sole possibility. As I look back now I must regretfully admit that it proved itself incapable of governing, because there were not enough suitable men to work it, and because our late enemies, intentionally as it would seem, hampered its start. Friedrich Ebert did a great work by restoring order, and Gustav Strese-

mann was the only German up to the present day who could have won back a position in the world for Germany. But both men died and both were irreplaceable. Even from the beginning, personal questions were none too fortunately settled. Prince Max had first wanted to appoint Konrad Haussmann as head of the Armistice Commission. Why it was then thought necessary that Erzberger should undertake the melancholy journey to Compiègne I do not know; Haussmann would certainly have been the more suitable man, if the only proper course was not taken, which was to put the whole affair on a purely military basis. Erzberger's position on the Armistice Commission meant the creation of a subsidiary government at the outset, for he was a glutton for work, and could never hear of any piece of business without wanting to settle it himself. Whatever may have been said of him, he was very intelligent and industrious, and a sincere patriot with Catholic leanings. He did not deserve his unhappy end, even though he had not the training and upbringing to enable him to bring all his great undertakings to a successful end. If he had been in Berlin on November 9th he would certainly have taken energetic measures to stop the revolution. But on that day he was already on the way to Compiègne, and then began the conflict between the Foreign Ministry and the Armistice Commission, a conflict that soon developed into a personal duel between Erzberger and my cousin Ulrich Brockdorff Rantzau, in which the latter was finally defeated, and as always in such cases, history can to-day no longer decide which was right. I had unfortunately wedged myself in between the two protagonists, as after Prince Max's resignation I stayed on in the Foreign Ministry, which I should not have done, for in the Germany of those days it was not possible to engage in politics from a purely Civil Service position. Rantzau himself failed as a Minister because he had no support in the National Assembly. By Solf's wish and with Rantzau's support I was entrusted with the preparations for the peace negotiations.

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Any such preparations were indeed quite superfluous, as no peace negotiations did in fact take place. Our intention was to stage the affair on a large scale, like a Geneva Disarmament Conference, with speeches and replies, whereas we found ourselves confronted with enemies still wholly possessed by a spirit of hatred and revenge. Clemenceau had no notion of damping the exultation of victory, or of building up a new world. Like his ancestor Brennus, he had only one idea, and that was *Vae victis!*" His is the main responsibility for the crazy world in which we now live. Since Versailles, no statesman has been found to lead Dame Europe out of the morass in which she was left by Clemenceau. This lady had already in her mythological days acquired an evil reputation as having been seduced by a bull. The attitude of our main adversary rendered our proposed arrangements, which involved the presence of forty experts, quite out of place. Not even a Talleyrand could have achieved anything at Versailles. A friend recently reminded me that I had always said at the time. "If I have to go to Versailles, I shall not take a delegation; I shall merely take one Privy Councillor." However, I was spared that ordeal, as I shall describe in due course.

Rantzau was very gifted and intelligent, but had serious disabilities: his extreme suspiciousness, which bordered on persecution mania, and his inability to make even the briefest impromptu speech before a large assembly, added to which there was his personal sensitiveness, which made him take every divergence of view as a personal matter. When he mentioned anyone he never said: "He takes this or that view," but "He is for me or against me."

At that time Rantzau always took me with him to Cabinet meetings, when peace questions stood on the agenda. He was a late riser, as he was accustomed to turn day into night. Erzberger, on the other hand, had hours of work behind him when he appeared at the Cabinet at ten o'clock, full of ideas and proposals. This always gave rise to disputes, as Rantzau used to demand an

adjournment until the following day in order to prepare himself

The following correspondence with a journalist friend of mine throws light on the above conditions.

*"Heilbronn. 20.2.1919*

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"I hope you will pardon me if I approach you directly for some information.

"The Conservatives have latterly demanded that the Armistice Commission, i.e., Erzberger, shall be subordinate to the Foreign Ministry. Erzberger rejects this, on the ground that one Minister cannot stand at the orders of another.

"But is it not the fact that the Armistice Commission stands in the closest connection with the Foreign Ministry, and must be subordinate to the Secretary of State? Our foreign service at the present time consists mainly of armistice and peace negotiations. The Secretary of State would seem to be expropriated if Erzberger is to be his independent colleague. I cannot help suspecting that considerations of this kind very nearly caused him to resign not long ago. Nothing is known publicly as to how these matters were composed. I am rather in the dark about all this, and would be very grateful to Your Excellency for a word of enlightenment.

"SCHAIBER.—

"Editor of the *Neckarzeitung*"

*"Berlin. February 25th, 1919.*

"DEAR HERR SCHAIBER,—

"In your friendly letter of the 20th last you certainly laid your finger on a wound. It was our original idea that the Armistice Commission would only function once while as the result of our enemies blackmailing policy it has become a permanent institution. I personally think that there will be no peace negotiations. There will be one armistice agreement after another, and the last will be called a preliminary peace. Everything else will be

done by the League of Nations. This gloomy prospect is not the fault of the Armistice Commission; it is due to the fact that we did not in December last refuse the second armistice agreement on financial grounds. There is now a complete cleavage between my office and that of Erzberger; he deals with internal affairs and I with foreign affairs. On important matters the decision is of course reserved for the Foreign Minister.

“Sincerely,

“BERNSTORFF.”

Here is the proper place for a letter to my friend Haniel, then on the Armistice Commission.

“Berlin. February 24th, 1919.

“MY DEAR HANIEL,—

“Whether there is any difference between our views will only be made clear by to-day’s negotiations. If the Entente offers to provision us on a reasonable basis until the harvest, and enables us to make the necessary payment—in other words, if they do not put the pistol to our heads, and in so doing insist that we sign our own economic death warrant, then you are quite right. But I still have a feeling that these people intend to ruin us completely, and in that case we ought to demand that they shall do it themselves and not embody our ruin in the form of a treaty. A man can only die once, and it is the mark of a decent man to face death with dignity when the time comes. And this, *mutatis mutandis*, applies, in my opinion, to nations. The main blunder was made as far back as December. The financial agreement ought then to have been rejected, and we should have pointed out that financial matters are out of place in the terms of an armistice. Such questions ought only to be settled in the peace treaty or not at all. However, the time for regret is past. This too would have involved a complete breach with Erzberger, whereas we now have to bridge over our cleavages as best we may.

“Always yours,

“J. BERNSTORFF.”

Rantzau and Erzberger were, however, at one in their view that little could be achieved by any negotiations with the enemy. But from this common opinion they drew different deductions. Rantzau had determined to refuse to sign the treaty; Erzberger was prepared to sign a treaty in the last resort, so as to secure a peace and then devote all available forces to the work of reconstruction. At that time there was for me only one solution of the question, as I was an official of the Foreign Ministry and had to be loyal to Rantzau, as indeed I was, though he was often under the impression that I wanted to become his successor, which was, in fact the last thing I wanted to happen. As I was on good terms with Erzberger, I had to do my best to mediate between the pair, though I never succeeded. When Rantzau was already at Versailles I was at Weimar with Ebert; our relationship became one of mutual confidence and I look back on it with pleasure. That was the time when Ebert was trying to effect a reconciliation between Rantzau and Erzberger, for which purpose Scheidemann, Erzberger and I went to Spa, where Rantzau joined us from Versailles. The latter had a first talk with me alone, and he began the conversation by saying vehemently: 'I won't shake hands with Erzberger,' to which I replied. 'Then you shouldn't have come here, the difference of opinion will become a personal difference, and there will be no getting round it at all.' In the end, the meeting took place in an atmosphere of perfect urbanity, but without practical result.

Shortly afterwards my late friend Carl Melchior came to see me on his way to Versailles and asked whether I had any message for Rantzau. I thanked him and said. "Please tell Rantzau that when I happened to meet Hermann Müller the other day he said he did not believe that the Rantzau policy could be maintained, as the masses were starving and wanted peace." Melchior certainly added nothing to my message. None the less, a few days later I received a rather melodramatic telegram from Rantzau to the following effect: 'I observe with astonishment

that you, too, are about to desert me, etc. . . ." The rôle of Brutus was not to my taste, and I quietly replied to Rantzau that it was my duty to keep him informed of the situation. I also gave the following interview to the Press, to avoid being personally dragged into the controversy.

*"Berlin. May 30th, 1919.*

"FOR THE WOLFF BUREAU,—

"According to statements in the French Press the view appears to prevail in Paris that it would be easier to induce Ambassador Count Bernstorff to sign the draft treaty than the existing head of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles.

"To a representative of the Wolff Bureau, who asked his opinion on these statements, Count Bernstorff said:

" 'I have been greatly surprised by the suggestion that I should be more inclined than Count Brockdorff-Rantzau to sign the enemy peace proposals. It is obvious that no German could be found who would set his name to a document that amounts to a sentence of death on his country. If our enemies honestly want peace, there is only one alternative: they must modify the offensive and impossible provisions in the draft treaty that they have put before us.' "

At this point my narrative parts company with Rantzau. Theoretically he was certainly right that the Versailles Treaty should not be signed, but on looking back it must be admitted that a rejection of the Treaty would only have been possible if the German nation "from the Etsch to the Belt" had been at one in the resolve to dedicate itself, if need were, to destruction, as did King Teia and his fellow-countrymen upon Vesuvius. But as so heroic a mood did not prevail, and was not to be aroused after five years of unexampled sufferings, privations, and disillusion, borne with the most admirable determination, there was nothing left but to bow to force and sign the Treaty, although we knew

that we should never be able to fulfil its conditions.

Moreover it is one of the usual German delusions, though by no means universally believed among us, that we should in the end have obtained better conditions by refusing the Versailles Treaty. This view is fundamentally false. The French would have invaded Germany with just as much pleasure as they did a few years later, when they illegally occupied the Ruhr. And at that time no one would have hindered their advance. The feeling in the world against Germany was about as strong as it is again to-day. Having once suffered the calamity of defeat, there was only one means of re establishing ourselves, and that was by reshaping the world order from within, as Stresemann tried successfully to do. Nothing could be done from without, as this would have arrayed the war coalition against us once more.

Among those who believed that a rejection of the Versailles Treaty would secure us better conditions were some of my old friends, such as Lichnowsky and the well known political economist Professor Lujo Brentano, as will be seen from the following letters:

*'March 26, 1919.*

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—

'I have unfortunately gathered from Erzberger's speech that the Government has submitted to the loss of Posen, but I recognise to my no small satisfaction that it is standing firm in the matter of Upper Silesia.

Although no doubt there is more possibility of our surrendering Posen than Upper Silesia or Danzig, I much regret none the less that such a surrender should be made public prematurely, instead of being reserved as a last card, and against the pressure of extreme necessity.

"My view is, as you know, that we can, generally speaking, maintain our frontiers at least in the East, if only we make up our minds to sacrifice the fateful gifts from Austria (with

the possible exception of Western Silesia).

“Our position as a whole has so far improved that the events in Hungary may cause the Entente to conclude as *speedy* a peace as possible.

“The news of Clemenceau’s proposed resignation points in this direction. If therefore our Government and our Peace Delegation only stand *firm*, and categorically refuse all demands that in any way exceed an interpretation of Wilson’s Fourteen Points in a sense favourable to us, the game is half won; our enemies will be under the necessity of negotiating with us, since they have no means of applying force. What can they do? They can neither start the war again, nor starve us out, nor occupy any further territories. If we play our cards with care, it is they who will be in a quandary, and we can make our conditions for a speedy restoration of peace.

“*I would, in the first instance, reject everything*, and in no case make any premature concessions. Then even Posen is not lost. The same applies to financial exactions, or intolerable economic demands, or attacks on the sovereign rights of the State (military restrictions, etc.).

“I very much hope you may see your way to proceed in this sense.

“Very truly yours,  
“LICHNOWSKY.”

“20.5.19.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—

“We, too, are very sorry to have missed you.

“I was delighted with your last interview.

“If we only stand *firm* and make it perfectly clear that we are prepared for a rupture, the position is not desperate, in spite of Lloyd George’s magniloquence. Unfortunately no one believes that we possess the necessary courage. It is, however, our only chance.

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

"The prospects for Upper Silesia seem to have become rather more favourable?

"Stiffen the nerves of those in power, and do not let us be bullied.

"Always yours,

"LICHNOWSKY

"Please let me know what will be a suitable evening at the Democratic Club '

*'München. March 22nd, 1919.*

"DEAR COUNT BERNSTORFF,—

I am just back from Berne, where I have taken part in the International League of Nations Conference. In my conversations with all the German Swiss and other friendly disposed foreigners, among whom was the former Swiss President, Schulthess, I got the impression that it is presumed as a matter of course that Germany will not accept the peace conditions that will probably be offered her by the Entente, indeed, that distinguished lady, Mrs Buxton, one of the three eminent English women who took part in the Conference, specially impressed on me to urge Germany to refuse the fantastic conditions of peace that were to be put forward by the Entente. There need be no fear in Germany that war would break out anew, indeed, France, England, and America were just as war weary as Germany, and sooner than see a fresh outbreak of war they would agree to concessions. But this result could only be achieved by rejecting the immoderate demands of France and England. I had the impression that it would be a great disappointment to those adherents of the Entente, which had not even yet succumbed to the hatred of Germany, if, at the conclusion of peace, Germany submitted to all the outrages which Clemenceau, Pichon, and the English Tories were determined to inflict upon her. I have received letters from English friends which make it clear that the indignation in England at the treatment of Germany by her

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enemies is daily increasing, and has been described as 'infamous' at public meetings, and that we should forfeit the remainder of the world's respect if we submitted to it. I regard it as my duty to inform you of these statements, which entirely agree with my own view.

"With best regards, etc.,

"LUJO BRENTANO."

Here follows the last letter ever written to me by Rantzau. He was then Ambassador in Moscow and I was in charge of the disarmament negotiations at Geneva. The letter is very characteristic of Rantzau.

"Moscow. Feb. 2nd, 1928.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—

"It was my plain duty, and *none the less* it was my firm intention to have thanked you long ago for your kind and valued letter of December 4th. You can hardly imagine the chaos of work here, in which indeed I am almost overwhelmed—from the proceedings at Geneva, of which the most important is that under your direction, to the countless applications for permits to visit Germany from earnest and inquisitive Soviet citizens, who are just now particularly anxious to become closely acquainted with 'our dear Fatherland.'

"The reasons for this curiosity are as mysterious to me as they will be to you; however, I am in fact responsible for granting permits to each of these sympathetic gentlemen.

"My views on our relation to Russia and its value are indeed well known to you, I do not doubt; *none the less* I am very anxious to get a quiet talk with you on the subject. I am convinced that you, in such constant contact with internal politics, could do much to further and facilitate my work, of which you speak so kindly; in the daily round, it mostly appears as a succession of uninterrupted misunderstandings of more or less

importance on both sides My services perhaps consist in having managed to surmount them hitherto, and to have taken, *tant bien que mal*, the only reasonable course

"As to your own activities, my dear cousin, you have been the greatest help to me, and therewith to the cause we have at heart. Both Chicherin and Litvinov expressed the warmest gratitude and acknowledgment, as of course I reported to Berlin. In public, however, and especially at the last Party Congress, Litvinov was less effusive, and indeed almost sceptical as to the motive that had determined your action, and I took occasion to call his attention to the fact in very plain terms. His inconsistent attitude is of course to be explained by the general policy of the Soviet Government and its more recent aims. I do not need to offer you any further observations, nor to point out that the prevailing ignorance of Soviet policy in Germany makes my attempt to flounder through to the admittedly right settlement for Germany an extremely precarious performance.

'Well, I ask now, as I asked you the last time, to do what you can to support the Soviet Russian attitude. You would indeed be quite right to make it clear to Herr Litvinov privately that the attacks on you in the Russian Press, which is dependent on the Government (especially regarding your 'ratting' over the Security question—you will have read them), are a rather unexpected acknowledgment; you never looked for thanks in politics, but you did count on loyal objectivity. For the rest, when he and Madame Litvinov arrive, please be friendly to them, and go on working as splendidly as you did at the last conference for the support that I am trying to maintain in the East against the West.

"Always your old friend and cousin—

"U B RANTZAU'

When the Rantzau crisis occurred, Ebert sent for me to offer me the Foreign Ministry. In view of the confidential relations that had come to exist between us, I decided to speak quite

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frankly to him in private and explain my refusal, by which he had been much put out. What I said amounted to this: "I have three reasons, of which each one is sufficient, but the third is for me the decisive one, though I am not prepared to state it in public.

"I have joined the Democratic Party, and want to stand for the Reichstag in that interest. But as a result of the present crisis, the Party proposes to withdraw from the Government and reject the Versailles Treaty. If therefore I now became Foreign Minister, I should, like Rantzau, have no support in the National Assembly, nor, of course, in the future Reichstag. This would very soon produce a fresh crisis.

"Moreover, as an official, I co-operated loyally in Rantzau's policy, and I could not change my direction after his resignation.

"Finally, I am, not unnaturally, an object of special dislike to our enemies, as, metaphorically speaking, I fought in the front-line trenches during the war. The war was decided in Washington. Had I had my way, there would have been no war with America. As a result, our enemies—from obvious motives—made me the target of really abominable propaganda. Whether or not they believed all they wrote and said I do not know; in any case the consequence was that it was believed by public opinion in other countries.

"You now propose to sign the Versailles Treaty and make an attempt to reach an understanding with the enemy. The miseries of Germany and of the world are so great that they can only be relieved by an international effort. If you appoint me Foreign Minister you will only add to the difficulty of your task. I can still do useful work, but only in the Reichstag or in the League of Nations, where I can stand free and unconstrained for new ideas, which I regard as constructive, and which are not tainted by the filth of war.

"You are kind enough to say that I could soon have any Embassy I liked, when I had served as Minister for a while, but how can we tell that I should receive the necessary *agrément*?"

When I look back at that interview to-day I still take the view that I was then right. In the work of reconstruction I should have been conscious all the time of the hatred of our late enemies, which did not die down until the end of my political career. Moreover, I subsequently received a good deal of confirmation of my attitude, most of which came through our then Ambassador in London. Lord Hardinge told him that his Government would protest if I, Rantzau, or Rosen took over the Foreign Ministry. This happened soon after the Versailles Treaty, and perhaps Rosen's poor success as Minister is to be explained by the prevailing feeling in England. Later on the same sort of thing happened when I went to England for the Aberystwith Congress, where Lord Tyrrell protested strongly against my presence. He actually arranged with my former friend Valentine Chirol to write a violent article against me in *The Times*. However, he let the cat out of the bag to our Ambassador, Sthamer, when he told the latter that my *Recollections of the War* was one of the best and most interesting books that had been written about the war. If the German Government had followed my advice, the English would hardly have succeeded in drawing the United States into the war.

Finally, Herriot became extremely excited when I went to the Congress at Lyons. However, as a private person, I did not need to submit to any restriction on my liberty, though I had to forgo the pleasure of seeing Herriot. The latter always maintained that he wanted an understanding with Germany. I certainly wanted one with France, but, with the exception of Briand and Paul Boncour, I myself met no French statesman at Geneva who was prepared to take even the first step: Loucheur might possibly be mentioned in addition, with whom I had long talks at various meals. Apart from politics we both agreed in our admiration of Voltaire, whose *Homme à Quarante Écus* seemed a prophecy of post war conditions.

The above interview with Ebert was the end of my official

career. I proposed to use my newly won freedom to help, as a member of Parliament, in the reconstruction of my country and of the world.

Men often wrongly estimate the significance of the great events of their own time, and especially of those in which they have been personally concerned. Goethe's well-known judgment on the epoch-making effect of Valmy was confirmed by history. Others, even the greatest of men, have been wrong in their judgments. Did Luther know that he was establishing the freedom of the human spirit and thereby ending the Middle Ages? Many other instances could be quoted that are calculated to imbue us with modesty in judging of our own times. Perhaps the world war does not stand for the beginning of a new epoch. Perhaps the increase of revolutionary governments in the world is a sign that we are but experiencing an interlude in the age of imperialism. Perhaps the terrors of the world war will leave no enduring pacifying effect. However, anyone who believes in the progress of mankind knows that it proceeds in spiral fashion. None the less, to us who lived through that time the change between the pre-war age and the present seems abysmal. Indeed it seems so great that we might almost say, like Oscar Wilde's host, an American secessionist: "Admiring our moon, eh? Ah, you should have seen it before the war."

When I had accompanied Rantzau to the station on his departure from Weimar, I returned to the Castle, where the rooms hitherto assigned to the Foreign Ministry were deserted. All the officials had gone to Berlin to await their future destinies. The only person I met was the "new master," Hermann Muller, who had sat in the chair that I had refused. At first he was rather desperate at having to carry the news to Paris that the German Government proposed to accept the enemy conditions, and he really did not know how he was going to do so. I offered to draw up a Note for him, as there was apparently no one else about. At last we managed to rout out Friedrich Gaus, who was later on Strese-

mann's legal adviser and chief colleague in the great days of the German Republic. As the result of our united efforts Hermann Müller's first Note was produced. I then went back to Berlin with him, as he wanted to consult me on a great many matters

The railway trams in those days were always overcrowded, and there were at least six persons in our compartment. The conversation turned mainly on the forthcoming signature of the Versailles Treaty and on the question who should sign on Germany's behalf a document which was destined to plunge Europe into the crisis that endures to-day, because it was destitute of any reconstructive plan. Dernburg remarked that it must be someone who possessed a black coat, upon which Hermann Müller exclaimed cheerfully: 'Then that cuts me out.' But I reminded him that in the old Ottoman Empire, when a unfavourable treaty had to be signed, an Armenian was employed for the purpose. He must, I continued, act accordingly; and when I said this in jest, I had no notion that a few days later poor Hermann Müller would himself have to make the journey to Versailles.

I was now free and could organise my life afresh. My wife wanted to live in the country, as she felt she had enough social life behind her for one incarnation—a view with which I entirely agreed, but I wanted to take up a political career and bear a hand in the reconstruction of Germany and the world. Both aspirations could quite well be combined if we transformed our summer and holiday existence at Starnberg into a permanent one, while I obtained a seat in the Reichstag. The transition from diplomatist to parliamentarian was not so simple as I, in my inexperience, had imagined. First I had to wait for the dissolution of the National Assembly and the elections to the Reichstag. In the meantime I was busily engaged in writing my first book, which I had been inspired to do by the Investigation Committee of the National Assembly; and there were also

special hindrances to be overcome in the new career upon which I had entered.

Every diplomatist has an aversion to speaking in public, and if he is forced by circumstances to do so, he keeps to a carefully prepared manuscript, because he knows how a speech may imperil international relations. A man who is not a born orator will never become one, but anyone with ideas can learn how to express them freely and with some effect. That is the point of the well-known anecdote about Demosthenes, as the craft alone can be learnt, not the art. As Goethe rightly says:

“Good sense and reason  
Need but little art for their expression.”

My first public speeches were a torture to myself and probably still more so to my hearers, as I always came into conflict with my manuscript. And then one day in Magdeburg I experienced a rebirth. I was there speaking one Sunday morning in the great Blumenfeld circus before a gathering of many thousand people, and when on the platform I discovered to my horror that the lighting was too bad for me to read my manuscript. So, *nolens volens*, I had for the first time to speak quite impromptu. Since then I have never had a manuscript before me again. Though my speeches were not flights of oratory, they have never brought me into any trouble and I have been quite able to defend myself against my opponents.

All Germans who loved their Fatherland and freedom more than any theories were, after the war, faced with the task of accommodating themselves to the new conditions for which a legal basis had been created by the National Assembly. This attempt in which I took part with all possible good will unfortunately failed. History does not seem to have allowed any of the great nations to conclude their revolutions without previous dictatorships. Cromwell, Napoleon, Stalin and Hitler are so many proofs of this, but dictatorship has never yet been a

permanent institution, it has led to democracy, especially in Western Europe, where by our civilisation we belong. The genius of Bismarck created Germany, but genius is not a permanent institution either, as we have discovered to our cost, for the lack of Bismarck's genius was the main cause of the disastrous world war.

In Western Europe the course of history led by way of Liberalism to Democracy. In Germany the intervening stage never materialised, as I have already explained, owing to the Emperor Frederick's premature death. Herein lies one of the main reasons for the failure of the German democratic Republic. Stein's remark a hundred years ago, that the number of free men in Prussia must be increased, is an admirable expression of the same view.

What we meant to achieve in the German Republic, and indeed had to achieve if it was to survive, was an increase of the number of Liberals, for there were only very few. Even within the ranks of the Democratic Party they were relatively rare, for most Democrats regarded Liberalism as identical with Manchesterism, which in our Socialistic era of course involved a serious though unjustified stigma. We German Liberals of the Republic regarded Manchesterism as an outworn historical category, but Liberalism as a purely intellectual standpoint, which even to-day could be described in the words of Schiller's *Posa* as 'Freedom of Thought'. We had no intention of bringing back the age of Liberalism, as a political idea it is in all countries retrograde and out of date. And yet the governmental form of Democracy cannot endure without a Liberal training. Our plan was more or less to retrieve Liberalism as soon as possible within the framework of Democracy.

It was with such considerations as these in mind that I and a few friends founded the Democratic Club in Berlin, of which I was the first President, and which has been, of course, with many others swallowed up in the abyss.

In the meantime, I was not content with my work in the Club

and in the Press; I took part in the first elections for the Republican Reichstag. The prelude to the campaign was the general meeting of the Party, which took place in Berlin. On this occasion I made the prescribed speech on foreign politics, and incidentally I made the following statement, to which I adhered until I withdrew from politics: "I would most urgently advise that we should not dispute as to whether the peace ought to have been signed or not. For the politician, who has to deal with foreign relations, the past is only of interest in so far as he can learn from it. For future policy the past has no practical value. Every day the problems of foreign policy have to be faced afresh.

"We propose accordingly to regard the Treaty of Versailles as accomplished fact, while persistently trying to get it revised by peaceful diplomatic means. In my opinion the next step for German foreign policy is to secure admission to the League of Nations."

My first attempt to get into the Reichstag failed, but I never regretted that failure, as it taught me a great deal. I was asked to stand for the constituency of Dusseldorf-West, and I indulged in the illusion that I could win it, or, speaking more correctly, that I could poll the 60,000 votes that, by our election law, were necessary to secure a mandate. I was glad of the opportunity to get acquainted with an industrial area, and I made good use of the occasion, delivering forty-eight speeches in as many places. But the whole district was still politically too much in the hands of the Socialists and the Centre to allow me any real chance. In none of my speeches did I omit to express the hope that we should succeed in establishing friendly relations with the French. On this point I always spoke more or less as follows: "A reconciliation with our neighbours in the West would be wholly desirable in itself and bring happiness to the entire world. It can easily be conceived how greatly civilisation and the economic life of the world would benefit if the Franco-German antagonism

were transformed into a common work for the ideal and material advantages of mankind. Think of an association between the Rhenish Westphalian industrial area with the North French and Lorraine iron and coal fields, which would be spontaneously joined by the Belgian and Luxembourg industrial areas. The reconstruction of Europe would thereby receive so tremendous a stimulus that all remaining obstacles could be easily overcome. If the French were capable of quiet reflection they would see that the only way out of the miseries of the present is for them to be borne in common. But unfortunately Keynes' description of French policy would appear to be correct. He explains the attitude of France by Clemenceau's obsolete imperialistic policy and the fear of Germany's vengeance. Now that the wrong way has once been taken, and has led to an unjust Carthaginian peace, the guilty conscience of the French urges them to persevere. They believe that the weakening of Germany is the one and only means of preserving them from the vengeance to come.

"So long as the attitude of France towards us has not entirely changed, any orientation of our policy towards France must be regarded as an illusion. But if the view of Keynes proves false, and France should show a disposition to allow us a reasonable economic existence on a national basis, the present German Democratic Republic would be only too glad to seek a political, cultural and economic rapprochement to France."

Moreover, in my first election campaign I was described by my opponents as a 'League of Nations bagman.' But I will deal with this later on in its appropriate place.

As often happens to a man in life, the apparent non fulfilment of a wish brings a greater satisfaction of the cherished hopes. As a result of my defeat in the Ruhr district, it became possible for me to stand, as was the desire of my heart, for a constituency in my native province Schleswig Holstein, owing to the recent plebiscite there, voted for the first Reichstag later than the rest of Germany. I had little hope of being nominated there, as

## R E I C H S T A G

Schleswig-Holstein was then an entirely safe constituency for the Democratic Party, and the members of the National Assembly were very ready to seek re-election there. Moreover I felt that decency forbade me to visit the constituency before I had been nominated, as I could not bear the idea of competing with Party friends. Finally, however, I was nominated at a General Meeting of the Schleswig-Holstein branch of the Party, for which I mainly had to thank Professor Otto Baumgarten, of Kiel University, and Johannes Rathje, editor of the *Kieler Zeitung*. A few days before the election I received a telegram that I must attend the meeting if my nomination was to go through. All's well that ends well. After a second and very lively campaign, I entered the Reichstag at the beginning of 1921, and there remained for seven years. As a schoolboy at Ratzeburg I had once been punished for taking part in an election: I now had to appear before a solemn assemblage there as parliamentary candidate.

In the Democratic Group in the Reichstag I always felt very much at ease. My colleagues' attitude towards me was extremely friendly, and I was allowed quite a free hand on foreign questions. And so, during all those seven years I always represented the Group at plenary sessions of the Reichstag, when foreign affairs were debated, and I also spoke for the Group in the "Foreign Committee." If I were to criticise the Group at all, I might perhaps say that there was rather too much tendency to theorise and too little "will to power," which is the quintessence of high politics. This was, indeed, the defect of the Reichstag as a whole.

At the foundation of the Democratic Party a very unfortunate thing happened, which was also a disaster for the Republic. I was then still an official, and am therefore not able to describe in detail what took place when the Party was formed. But the result of the negotiations was only too plain, as Stresemann was not included in the Party; he founded the German People's

Party instead, of which he was the leader. So long as I was in the Reichstag I did my very best to repair this blunder by trying to bring about the amalgamation of the two Parties. Proof of this may be found in the last of Prince Max of Baden's letters (see page 211). The blunder was doubly damaging, as apart from the fact that Stresemann was far the most eminent statesman of his time, it led to a deep political cleavage in the so-called educated bourgeoisie, if I am to avoid the adjective 'Liberal'. It was only necessary to attend one election to realise that the Democratic Party and the German People's Party always tried to win the same constituencies, and that their organisations were consequently at bitter feud. The People's Party was regarded as the more distinguished of the two. When I was standing for Duisburg a member of the Party was urging his domestic staff to vote Democratic. A cheerful young housemaid answered, "I don't know whether I can do that. The best people in Duisburg are all voting People's Party." *Mutatis mutandis*, millions argued in the same fashion, and hence arose an outbreak of that disastrous German national disease—inferiority complex.

My maiden speech in the Reichstag was made at the time when the London Reparations ultimatum was in the air. In the course of my remarks I said that German foreign policy as a whole should be established on the idea of achieving a solidarity between the economic interests of all nations. From the Right came shouts of "Tell that to Briand!" To-day as I write this, I am rather amused to remember how often I followed this advice later on in Geneva, and discussed these very questions with Briand and his colleagues. I still believe to-day that here is one of the main tasks of the League of Nations.

The financial question played a subordinate part in the decision of May 10th, 1921, because our own offers as well as the demands of the ultimatum were, in fact, equally incapable of fulfilment. Who indeed was in a position to make a correct estimate of Germany's capacity to pay? We had, alas, to pay as

much as we were able, because we were beaten in the world war, and for no other reason. It was, however, a step in advance that the ultimatum did not put forward the hypocritical lie of Germany's sole moral responsibility for the war as the foundation of Reparations.

The decision depended almost entirely on a subjective or intuitive judgment of the foreign-political situation. Each individual had to answer the question how the Napoleonic policy of France could best be met. The members of the Reichstag who voted for rejection were mainly influenced by the fact that they believed that the French would certainly invade the Ruhr, and Upper Silesia was in any case lost, so that nothing remained but to allow French Imperialism to destroy itself, which would happen as soon as it became clear that Reparations could not be extracted by force. We, who voted for the acceptance of the ultimatum, proceeded from the conviction that we must, cost what it might, save the unity of the German nation, Upper Silesia, and the Ruhr. We did not doubt that the French, if they once advanced, would march as far as Wurzburg or Bamberg, so as to drive a wedge between Northern and Southern Germany. On that account the rejection of the ultimatum was tantamount to the destruction of the unity of the German nation, the loss of the Ruhr for a long period, and the surrender of Upper Silesia for ever. Under these circumstances the acceptance of the enemy conditions was undoubtedly to be regarded as the lesser evil, especially as the public opinion of the world, including that of the neutrals, was against us. Bitter as this truth might taste, the fact remained that foreign countries were almost unanimously of the view that we wanted to shirk the consequences of our defeat.

The acceptance of the ultimatum should, in my opinion, have been used to try to save Upper Silesia. As soon as it became clear that this question would be referred to the League of Nations, I, quite against my usual habit of reserve, went to the

then Chancellor, Wirth, and urged him to take steps to secure our admission to the League. I took the view that we must fight for Upper Silesia. We should not always wait upon our fate at the hands of the Great Powers. Wirth's attitude was not adverse, but he sent me to Rosen, the Foreign Minister. That meant the loss of any chance of a favourable settlement of the question, as Rosen was a violent opponent of the idea of the League. That, however, was not at issue at the moment; the point was—were we to sacrifice Upper Silesia without a struggle? Germany must not voluntarily stand aside when her interests were being bartered away by other Powers.

Although I had been snubbed over the Upper Silesian question, I was spontaneously called into consultation when the state of war with America came to a long awaited conclusion and a new Ambassador was about to be sent out. The United States have indeed always been inclined, in the proud consciousness of their self sufficient power, to settle international matters in a one sided and legalistic fashion, as we have so often experienced in our negotiations with them on questions of commercial politics. But such a one-sided peace as that of Washington was indeed a novelty in international law. In stating this fact I am making no reproach against American constitutional procedure, for this conclusion of peace was in any case much better than any recognition of the Versailles Treaty, which had kept Europe in a permanent state of war for the preceding two years.

Hitherto there had been two simultaneous tendencies in the policy of the United States. On the one side, political isolation, as the legacy from George Washington, was regarded as an absolute dogma, on the other, the aim was economic interrelation with the whole world. This antithesis to some extent explains Wilson's policy and its final failure. The doctrine of economic interrelation led Wilson to the conviction that political isolation could no longer be maintained. But as American public opinion wanted to stand aside from the European conflict, Wilson tried to

combine the two currents by negotiating between the belligerent Powers a peace without victory, which should not merely secure the freedom of the seas and therewith protect the trade of the world, but also establish a League of Nations, in which, after general disarmament, all disputes were to be settled by negotiation and not by force. This policy of Wilson, which meant a deliberate departure from isolation, came to nothing as a result of the declaration of unrestricted U-boat warfare. The United States entered the war, thereby entirely surrendering their political isolation, and Wilson won the war for the Entente. But I have already dealt with this in detail.

We should be in error if we regarded the lengthy debates in Congress over the conclusion of peace as an expression of any sentiment favourable or unfavourable to the Germans on the part of the various factors. There can be no question of that. It is generally desirable, in judging the political motives of other peoples, to count as little as possible on any preference or dislike for other nations. The deciding factor is the ideal and actual political trend of a people, which will be powerfully influenced by economic interests. Rightly has a German-National historian and publicist pointed out, in discussing Harding's first pronouncement, that we find in it the same ideology as in Wilson's speeches, and that we must therefore regard this ideology as the common property of the American nation. The prevailing trend of political ideals in America is quite different from that in Germany, and the failure to recognise this fact was one of the main blunders in our policy when there was still a chance of preventing the United States from entering the war. It was our business not to repeat the same blunder when confronted with the task of restoring friendly relations with America. It was, essentially, much easier to achieve this desirable object with the United States than with the States of the Entente, because there had never been any real political antagonism between Germany and America before the war. It was only through a specially unlucky

concatenation of circumstances that the United States was induced to enter the war. Since then, however, as a result of the war propaganda, and our own blunders, an attitude hostile to Germany had been produced in America which had first to be overcome. The Americans are, however, much too acute politicians and men of business to allow themselves to be influenced in practice by such feelings, once a state of peace has been restored. In this connection it is especially noteworthy that the resolution of Congress referred to the "conclusion of the state of war with the Imperial German Government. This represented a deliberate gesture of friendship towards the German Republic, which, in due accord with American political ideals, was regarded with sympathy in the U.S.A. In accord, too, with the tradition of the United States, the Washington Government requested that all negotiations should be carried on there. Important American problems always have to be settled at home, and this tradition was once more duly honoured by Wilson's fiasco at Versailles. It was to be assumed, indeed, that the United States would resume diplomatic relations after the proclamation of peace, so that there might be a German Embassy in Washington, with which details could be negotiated on the spot. Having regard to American conditions and traditions, a scholar of world reputation would have been best suited to join the severed threads again. The most successful diplomacy in the world—that of England, almost always and everywhere represented by professional diplomats—was never so well served in Washington as by James Bryce. I was often very thankful in the years 1914–1917 that he was no longer my opponent. Washington is quite a special post, and calls for other qualities than those demanded by the European capitals. An understanding of the American character, so strange to a European, and a thorough knowledge of the English language, is absolutely essential, for no other tongue is current coin in the United States. An Ambassador must always be ready to make an impromptu speech in English,

whether at a meeting or after a dinner, setting forth the point of view of his nation and his Government. The Reichstag had indeed expressed the wish that a diplomat *de carrière* should be sent to Washington, but for the first few years a political *novus homo* with a world reputation seemed more in place, as he would not be handicapped by any of the unpleasant recollections of the world war.

High policy was not at first to play any part in the negotiations with the United States. The Ambassador was merely to follow the great Washington Conference, to which we had not been invited, in the capacity of a silent observer. I thought this was no great disability, as we alone of all nations had already completely disarmed, and at the Conference we should merely have had to give our blessings to decisions taken by others, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. Our attitude towards the Washington Conference should have been one of dignified reserve, not of ridicule, with which it was in fact treated by part of the German Press.

If we were to learn from our disaster to think and feel more in terms of foreign politics than before, it would not be so hard for the Germans to realise that the political ideal of the American nation is a pacific one. At the same time, American pacifism was quite differently constituted from the German variety, which was led away into such crazy proposals as that put forward by the Essen Pacifist Congress, that the Reichswehr should be abolished. In political questions we are afflicted unfortunately by an incessant vacillation between extremes. But between a policy of force and the Utopia of "Never another war" there stands a third alternative, namely the policy of understanding, which is the quintessence of all diplomacy. American pacifism is based on the national training for a commercial life and the idealist attitude that war is an evil, though it may sometimes be a necessary evil. We, on the other hand, have been more or less brought up to war and the idea that war is a moral purge. In the

latter respect we in Germany have suffered a grievous disillusion and gone through very bitter experiences. The difference of standpoint may certainly be explained by historical development and geographical position. But that does not in any way alter the fact that it is our business to understand such differences and take them into our political calculations. If we had done this sooner we should not, by a theoretic glorification of a policy of force, have led the world to believe that we pursued such a policy, when this was not the case, and later on we should not have degraded the sacred war of defence by annexationist aims. The Versailles Treaty proved that we were waging a war of defence, a proof that our policy could not produce, because it was pitched in a different key. The situation is very much the same to day.

When all preliminaries for the re establishment of diplomatic relations with America had been duly arranged in accordance with the above considerations, our Government requested me, through my friend Haniel, who was then Secretary of State at the Foreign Ministry, to go to Berchtesgaden and ask Adolf Harnack, who was there on his holidays, whether he would be my first successor at Washington. He was not asked to engage himself for more than a year. Apart from the political importance of the question, it was a very agreeable mission from a personal point of view, as I had a great respect for Harnack. I had read several of his works, and I still hold the view that there is no finer and more vivid analysis of our religion than his *Essence of Christianity*. At our meeting we spoke of these matters first, before we passed to politics. In the latter regard the visit proved a failure, as the great scholar described himself (in English) as 'm��quate.' But this little visit has remained in my mind as a noble memory, like a pilgrimage to the Holy Grail.

We were living then, and we are in fact still living to-day, at a time when foreign politics—compared with internal politics—are completely decisive. I have already mentioned above that

this relation between the two spheres of political activity has constantly been prominent in German history, but it has never been so evident as since the Versailles Treaty. Only within the scope of foreign politics can the solution be found that will lead to the reconstruction of our fatherland. Bismarck's master mind understood how to solve the question of German unity by an astute foreign policy, after it had become obviously impossible to bring it to a head by means of internal policy. We, on the other hand, were perforce compelled to seek aid in the sphere of foreign policy, or we should infallibly have been ruined.

German foreign policy could not then be anything else than a defensive position against Poincaré's Napoleonic policy. We could, indeed, as in the Wiesbaden agreement, make an attempt to strengthen the reasonable elements in France. But our policy had to reckon with the fact that Imperialistic circles there had the upper hand, and would take our incapacity to pay as a pretext for destroying the unity of the German people, the maintenance of which was at that time the sole mainspring of all German policy.

Walter Rathenau was the first German statesman who, after the Versailles Treaty, made the attempt to realise such considerations in actual practice. His path led him from the Wiesbaden Agreement by way of the Cannes Conference to that of Genoa. And it was indeed a thorny path. Briand, who at Cannes had begun to shed the war psychosis, was, as a penalty for this, dismissed by Poincaré, and at Genoa Rathenau immensely increased the difficulty of his own task by the Treaty of Rapallo. Anyone who looks back on that to-day can only say with Mephisto: "What lavishness was there so sorely wasted!" At that time there was an extraordinary difference of opinion in Berlin in the matter of Rapallo. I myself spoke against it in the Group. One day my old friend, Secretary of State Haniel, of whose recent death I was deeply grieved to learn, gave a luncheon in honour of the new American Ambassador, Houghton.

Immediately after greeting his host he hailed me with the words: "All the boys of the Metropolitan Club send you their love." This strikingly friendly salutation gave me great pleasure at the time, because, as the result of enemy propaganda, even in Berlin the most fantastic rumours had been put about by my enemies regarding my activities and connections in Washington. It may here be observed that the Metropolitan Club is the most distinguished in Washington.

When President Ebert stepped into the reception room, Lichnowsky and I were in conversation at a window. He came up to us with the words: "Well, what do the ex Ambassadors say to Rapallo?" Lichnowsky blurted out promptly: "I am always for Russia." Whereupon Ebert looked at me rather diffidently and I replied: "To my mind the solution of the Reparations question, subject to the unity of the German people, is the main task. On that account I incline to the West. The President said, 'I agree with you,' and began to talk of other things.

I have already laid down as the principle of this book that I will write only of my own experiences, so that I may adhere strictly to the truth. For that reason I will deal no further with Rapallo, as I was not present and do not know the details of what occurred. My opposition to the transaction in no way disturbed my friendly relations with Rathenau. On the main point—our ultimate object—we were at one, and he regarded me as his main stand by in the Group, although we did not always agree about methods. I, for example, regarded the phrase, 'Policy of Fulfilment,' as an unfortunate one, I wanted to use the League of Nations as an instrument of German policy; and finally I was constantly pressing Rathenau to be on his guard against personal violence, for which he was never prepared. On the very evening before his death we had a long talk about all these matters, in the course of which I confided my anxieties to him and told him that his policy of fulfilment had answered, but that, after all, nobody believed that

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"In an article by a Jewish compatriot in No 539 of your valued journal it was, rightly as I think, maintained that anti Semitism provided the motive for Rathenau's murder. As Herr Korell, a member of our Party, said in his fine oration at Rathenau's funeral. 'He fell, as a Jew and as an individual, a victim to that so-called idea of national purity which is no more than a materialistic embodiment of a very base instinct. And Korell justly added. 'Unless we Christians resolutely rid ourselves of this unchristian attitude, the atmosphere in Germany will never improve.'

'Anti Semitism has always existed and always will exist, so long as there are people wanting in humanity who attach more importance to depreciating the peculiarities of others than to developing their own personalities to the highest attainable point. I have always detested anti Semitism, not merely because in the course of a long life I have had many loyal and trusted Jewish friends, but because as a politician I see in anti Semitism a weakness, and one that I have always regarded as involving the sin against the holy spirit of politics. Anyone who starts a competitive struggle in the belief of his own inferiority will inevitably be defeated. The ultimate effect of anti Semitism is to inspire feeble souls with the fear that the small Jewish minority might establish a spiritual, political and economic domination over us. The German nation plunged into the abyss owing to its own political blunders, and is still labouring sorely under its own political inexperience, but apart from that it is sound in mind and body. Are we to be afraid of our Jewish compatriots brilliant gifts? Were it not better to use them to the full in the service of our nascent Republic, which needs all available forces to rise like a Phoenix from the ashes of military defeat? I regard everyone as a German who loves the language

of Goethe as his own, and who is resolved to build up the State on the foundations laid by Frederick the Great, Stein and Bismarck. To view the concept of Germanism otherwise in these days seems to me affected, as very few of our countrymen could boast that they had not a single drop of Slav or Latin blood in their veins. The idea of nationality is for me a historical one. They are German that feel themselves historically German.

"The above-mentioned article inspired me to take down several volumes in my library that deal in more or less moderate fashion with the antithesis of Jews to ourselves, in the matter of race and mentality; and in a book by Treitschke, who is considered by even our super-Nationalists as a classic witness, I came upon the following conclusion: 'It can no longer be disputed that Jewry can only now play a part if its members make up their minds to become Germans, French and English, and, without prejudice to their ancient memories, merge themselves in the nation to which they constitutionally belong. That is the only, very reasonable and just request that we Westerners have to make.' Rathenau was certainly just such a Jew as this, and yet he was murdered by fanatical anti-Semites. He was prominent in his efforts for the construction of German industry, he wrote a number of thoughtful and valuable works on the future of the German nation, and finally, during and after the war, he placed himself at the disposal of the Fatherland, when we stood in such bitter need of his great abilities. Rathenau was the first Foreign Minister since the war to attain any success. Under his leadership the antagonism of world public opinion against us was modified, and this was a condition for any further work. It would have been a political blunder had we not employed a man of Rathenau's calibre in the service of the Republic, just as it was a political blunder to murder him, apart from the fact that murder is a crime.

"If anyone feels disposed to exclude the poet of the Lorelei

from the German Parnassus, let him permit himself the feeble joke. He merely makes himself ridiculous. But in politics the matter is different. The phrase *plectuntur Achivi* applies not only to the mania of Caesarism. When the nation goes mad the result is the same. In England it never occurred to anyone to attack the great statesman Disraeli on the ground of his race. Our Republic needs men of character and resolution who will set themselves against this anti Semite lunacy before it leads to further disaster. Bismarck's views on this matter were quite other than those of his pretended adherents in the ranks of German Nationalism, who praise the Iron Chancellor and destroy his achievement, who tear down the flag of the Republic and sing the song of the black red-gold Hoffmann von Fallers leben 'You mock yourselves and you know not how. It is well known that Bismarck said he would be glad if one of his sons married a Jewess. He felt himself strong enough to absorb the Jewish gifts and failings as well as Jewish blood into the melting pot of national historical development.

"Are we to be so feeble as to allow our people to be goaded on to further violence? We ought, on the contrary, to pledge ourselves at Rathenau's grave that for the future we will carry on the war of politics with intellectual weapons and the voting paper alone. Let us hope that in the German Republic there will only be one rivalry between Christians and Jews, and that will be for the credit of rendering the greatest services to the Fatherland. An essential condition for this is, however, that the German people should for the future judge the services of their eminent men by purely practical standards, and not by religion or racial origin. In the meantime we must to-day blush for shame that a prominent Jewish statesman has been murdered merely because he was a Jew.

The unfortunate German people had to pay for Rathenau's murder by the French invasion of the Ruhr in contravention

of the Treaty, as Rathenau would certainly have found means and methods of preventing it. Our prospects only improved when Stresemann came to the helm.

Meantime, until the first Reichstag election of 1924—there were two in that year—I was mainly occupied in my constituency. I have already mentioned the foundation of the Democratic Club in Berlin, and in the same interest in my own homeland I took a share in a weekly publication issued by "United Germany," and in the *Kieler Zeitung*. I had again grown used to the peculiarities of the Schleswig-Holsteiners, whose placidity made me rather nervous at the outset of my first election campaign there. The applause was so slight that I felt almost inclined to abandon the contest. But a Party friend from Kiel comforted me with the words: "Why on earth are you so upset? You get just as much applause here as any *prima donna*." Then I learned to keep a careful watch on my audience, and I realised the justice of the observation that when the Schleswig-Holsteiner is really interested and attentive, this is expressed almost solely by his pipe going out. At the fourth election in 1928 it was with much reluctance that I parted from my Schleswig-Holsteiners. My work on the League of Nations took up nearly all my time, and the constant train journeys from Starnberg to Kiel and Geneva were, with my increasing years, beyond my physical strength. When I look back to-day I only regret that my Schleswig-Holstein campaigns never fell in that lovely season of the year when the beeches are gay with fresh green foliage and the sunlight glitters on the sea, which is not always, in the words of the poem, "wild with breakers surging up the creeks and coves."

Though we did not belong to the same Party, there gradually developed a relation of confidence between Stresemann and myself that forms the main subject of the last chapter in this book. As I have mentioned above, our connection had already begun during the world war. Later on, when Stresemann was

## THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

from the German Parnassus, let him permit himself the feeble joke. He merely makes himself ridiculous. But in politics the matter is different. The phrase *pletuntur Achivi* applies not only to the mania of Cæsarianism. When the nation goes mad the result is the same. In England it never occurred to anyone to attack the great statesman Disraeli on the ground of his race. Our Republic needs men of character and resolution who will set themselves against this anti Semite lunacy before it leads to further disaster. Bismarck's views on this matter were quite other than those of his pretended adherents in the ranks of German Nationalism, who praise the Iron Chancellor and destroy his achievement, who tear down the flag of the Republic and sing the song of the black red gold Hoffmann von Fallers leben 'You mock yourselves and you know not how.' It is well known that Bismarck said he would be glad if one of his sons married a Jewess. He felt himself strong enough to absorb the Jewish gifts and failings as well as Jewish blood into the melting pot of national historical development.

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Minister, we once spent our Christmas holidays together at Lugano, and finally we were brought into constant contact on the Foreign Committee of the Reichstag. Stresemann so far reconciled Hindenburg to me that the latter allowed me to take up official work again. An account of these various personal relations may well form the conclusion of my fifth chapter.

The Presidential election of 1925 will be regarded by history as the death warrant of the Republic. We who were closely concerned in it did not then see so clearly, or we should have made greater efforts to bring about a different result. Since the Versailles Treaty Germany has been involved in a vicious circle. The German reaction was the product of French post war policy. Every act of Germany that pointed to reaction was utilised by the French as an excuse for harsher measures, with the result that the German reaction was strengthened. And so it went on until, as in ancient Greek tragedy, the very catastrophe was produced which it was desired to avoid.

*Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* So long as I was a member of the Reichstag I there concerned myself exclusively with matters of foreign politics. The Presidential election formed the only exception. Both in my own Group and in inter Group discussions I energetically supported the collective candidature of Otto Gessler at the first poll, and at the second poll I equally opposed the collective candidate of the Left—Wilhelm Marx. Gessler failed, partly owing to the factious intrusion of a Socialist candidate—and indeed the Social Democrats are largely answerable to the tribunal of history for the fact that there is no German Republic to-day; and partly owing to most regrettable intrigues by the other Parties. Just because Gessler had never let himself be absolutely bound by Party doctrine, just because he went forward on his own way unperturbed by the political colourings of the individual Governments, which all had to do the same thing in the end, just for that very reason he was the most suitable candidate.

It was an even greater misfortune for the Republic that Marx should have been put forward at the second poll as collective candidate for the Left. I have a great personal respect for Marx, but the Left should not have put up such an avowed clerical, especially in educational matters, as the collective candidate. We are the people of the Thirty Years War, and the German needs a very light rein in ecclesiastical matters, if he is not to grow refractory. I think I can say with certainty that Hindenburg would not have won the election if the *furor Protestanticus* had not been mobilised against Marx.

A year later Stresemann appointed me to represent Germany on the Preparatory Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations. On that occasion the conversation between us ran roughly as follows:

Stresemann: "The President is very glad that you are willing to undertake this work."

Myself (laughing): "I really can't believe that, after the bitter disputes between Hindenburg and myself during the war, which were actually continued before the Investigation Committee of the National Assembly."

Stresemann: "Well, as you aren't taking the matter tragically, I will confess that your appointment cost me a certain amount of persuasion. When the President approved, he said spontaneously: 'If I had known that the Americans would get across, I would not have decided for the U-boat war. But I relied on the assurances of the Navy.' I too was in the same boat, in so far as I believed that the U-boats would keep the Americans off."

Two years passed. Then the President—again spontaneously—sent for me to celebrate our reconciliation by expressing his approval of my conduct of the negotiations. "I like a man to speak his mind with candour and clearness," he said. Then followed a long talk, in which the President discussed all the

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

problems of foreign politics with me in considerable detail. As I was taking my leave he said. "Do you believe in disarmament?" to which I replied. "Not in my lifetime." The old gentleman laughed and closed the interview with the words.

'Then I shan't see it either'

Although I felt no need of approval, from whatever source, yet I was glad of this reconciliation, because it revealed a fine and human trait in the President's character. I was in this case the earthen pot and the iron one. He had no need to confess an error, and he did it of his own free will.

## CHAPTER VI

### LEAGUE OF NATIONS

IN the winter months between the German revolution and the Versailles Treaty, in Berlin great hopes were set on the League of Nations. The historian of Europe after the world war may well be surprised at the unkindness with which the idea of reconstruction was treated by destiny. The two sides still confront each other to-day as though the war were still going on, because the hoped-for *beau geste* on the part of the victors always came too late or not at all. I can only give a partial picture, as I saw it with my own eyes, but twice at least, so far as my experience went, a complete world reconciliation was possible: immediately after the war, before the door of the League of Nations had been slammed in our faces, and after the meeting at Thoiry.

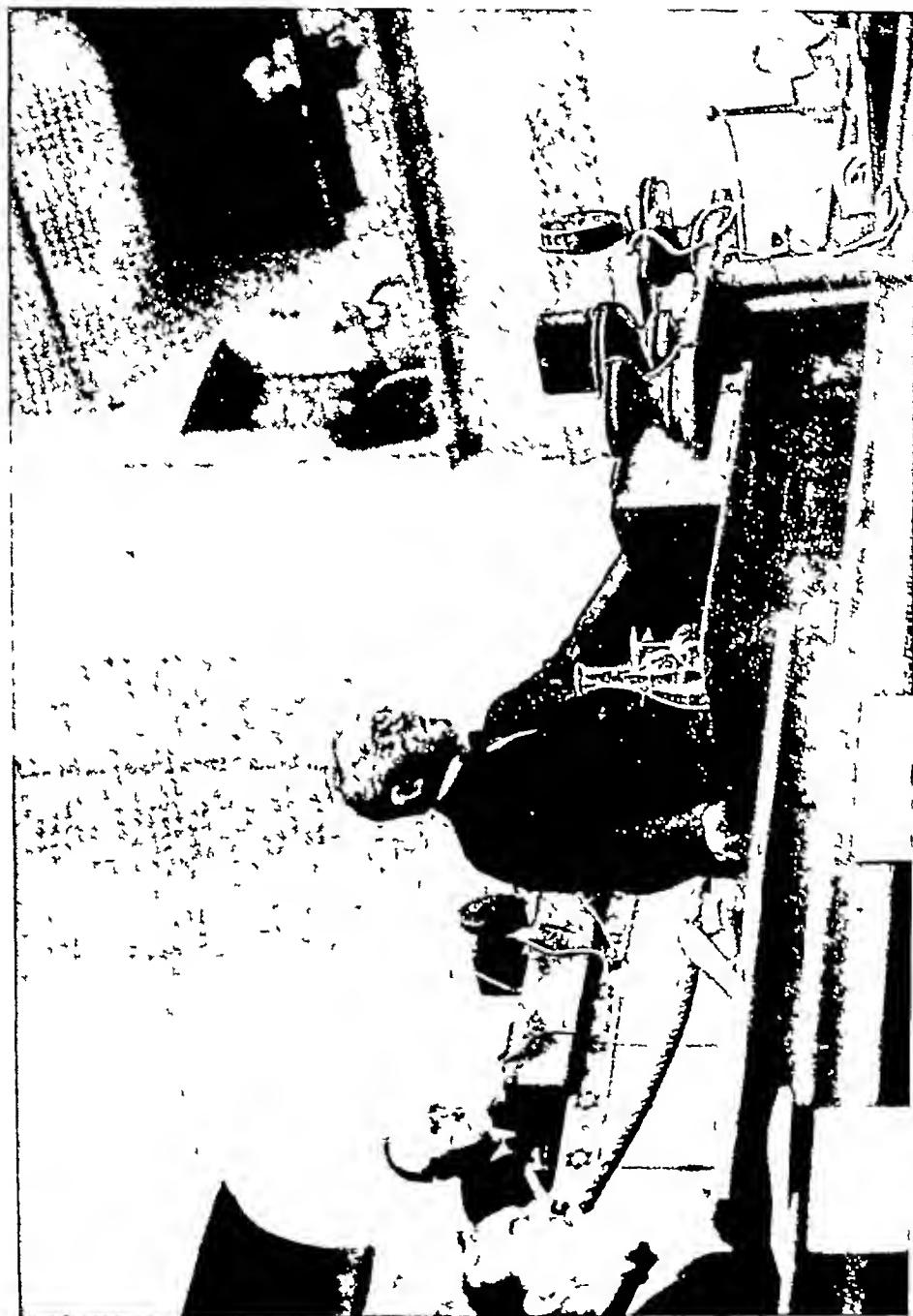
In my capacity as President for many years of the German League of Nations Union, which came into existence even before the League was founded, I can testify to the fact that the idea of a League of Nations was active in Germany at a time when the existing League was formed, and that we in Germany, as is indeed proved by our draft proposal at Versailles, were prepared to go considerably further in the realisation of the League idea than is done in the present League Covenant. In my view, it should be our urgent task to strengthen the idea of the League of Nations, to improve the existing League, and not to utilise the defects that are here and there apparent as an excuse to retire from the League, but regard them as a challenge to try to make it more effective.

The first rebuff to Germany through the League of Nations

had a very adverse and probably decisive effect on the feeling among us until the meeting at Thoiry. When the German League of Nations Union was founded in Berlin after the revolution, all persons of good will and those who believed in reconstruction took occasion to be present. It was a dream! Then followed a steady decline of the League shares in Germany; indeed, they were almost at zero when I was elected President of the Union after Erzberger's resignation. It would be rather difficult for me to represent my views of those days, after all that has happened in the meantime, had I not kept a copy of a signed article which I communicated to the Press as newly elected President, and which I here append.

"As every serious individual politician must stand for a moral idea and at the same time pursue a practical purpose, it is my purpose to hold up the League as an ideal, and to influence German foreign policy in a definite practical direction. The ideal is the establishment of a genuine League of Nations, over which the majesty of justice shall preside, and upon the basis of full recognition of the racial right of self determination give each nation its due and make possible a general process of disarmament. Our enemies proclaim this ideal as Utopian. Even our own Kant has said. The condition of peace among people living together is not a natural condition, which is, in fact, a condition of war, not necessarily an actual outbreak of hostilities, but a permanent threat of them. Peace therefore needs to be established."

"We should certainly be Utopians if we believed we could bring about eternal peace by next Thursday. Eternal peace is an ideal, which, like all moral and religious ideals, will never be realised upon this earth. As often as the ideal has appeared among us in human guise it has ever been crucified and burned. But that does not alter the fact that the effort after an ideal is the noblest element in individual and national life, and that the



ADDRESSING THE LEAGUE ASSEMBLY, 1928



history of the world must be regarded as the continual striving of humanity towards the realisation of a moral idea.

"But anyone who will not, from moral motives, substitute the rule of justice for the rule of the sword, anyone who does not believe in the idea of the League of Nations, but conceives it as a Utopia, must at least realise, as a practical German politician, that the endeavour to set up a genuine League of Nations is for us the sole possibility of salvation, and that any other German foreign policy offers no prospects of success.

"Lord Grey, who has accepted the chairmanship of the English League of Nations Union, recently said in a speech that the main lesson of the world war consisted in this, that we must no longer view the world as members of one nation, but of a community of nations. This remark betrays a recognition of the fact that, even to the nation that gained most by it, the world war brought more harm than good. Present sufferings are now so great that they can only be healed by international procedure and international methods. Individual States appear helpless against the catastrophe of to-day. Lord Grey's realisation of the truth is an even more bitter necessity in our own case, for the reconstruction of Germany, our great hope and our highest political aim, cannot, however bitter the admission must be, be brought about without foreign help. The international sense can be very well combined with a strong national feeling, as was proved by the age of Germany's highest spiritual achievements. It was classical idealism that first created German national feeling, but combined it with a recognition of world citizenship.

"The idea of a League of Nations has been so sorely damaged by the peace conditions and the attitude at Versailles that the majority of Germans to-day resignedly believe that they must abandon the League as a Utopia, although the conception was almost universally welcomed after the revolution. Moreover, the fact that Wilson, who inflicted so grievous a disappointment

on us at Versailles, had hitherto been the main champion of the League, influenced German public opinion against the idea. But we must not forget that, in spite of all the defects in its present constitution, a League of Nations has for the first time in history become a political reality—the League of Nations which was designated by the philosopher of Königsberg, Immanuel Kant, as a German idea, and claimed as an ideal of humanity. The fact that Wilson, from diplomatic or intellectual incapacity, was disloyal to his ideals at Versailles, should not be any reason for us to alter our views and feelings regarding the idea of such a League. However deeply we may have been disappointed by Wilson's attitude at Versailles, however little the present constitution of the League corresponds to the ideals which the President himself set forth at an earlier date, none the less the idea of the League of Nations is still alive, and will prevail, in spite of the unpopularity from which it at present suffers in Germany, because for us and for the entire world there is no other means of salvation.

'I regard it as the task of German foreign policy to take up the struggle for the idea of the League where Wilson let it slip out of his hands. It will be variously objected that Germany can no longer pursue a foreign policy because she has no power. Certain it is that power is desirable for the realisation of political ideas but this power need not be wholly of a military kind. Remember how we were handicapped in the world war by our political backwardness, and how the power of ideas in the whole world was arrayed against us. There is a deep gulf fixed between the archaic political romanticism of the German Sovereign State and the enlightening time-spirit of Western Europe, where English Puritanism has been wedded to the spirit of the French Revolution. Let us think, too, of the strong propagandist effect, used so sorely to our damage, on the one side of Bolshevism, a time when Russia was quite powerless from the military point of view, and on the other of Belgium, a weak State which could

appeal to the injustice that she had suffered at our hands. German foreign policy has in the past been accustomed to seek refuge in the forces already condemned to perish. In the future it must be a policy of ideas and moral force. With such a policy a nation of eighty millions cannot be ignored, even if it is dismembered, and possesses neither an army nor a fleet.

“The great blunder of the Versailles Peace Conference—and that blunder was repeated at Spa—lay in this, that the victor, in his desire to punish Germany and in his greed for spoil, forgot the tribulations of the world. Every German cannot be too urgently recommended to read the brilliant account of the negotiations by the Englishman, Keynes. While the entire European family of nations was sinking deeper and deeper into misery, the peacemakers at Versailles were discussing the demands for reparations at a figure that could not have been extracted even by force. Instead of drawing up a comprehensive programme for the reconstruction of the world by all nations, the conquered were excluded from the newly-created League of Nations, which, as a result, remained a torso, and an alliance directed against Germany. The face of the world would in the meantime have been completely changed by the admission of Germany and all other States. The struggle for the reform of the League does offer a field for the active foreign policy, for which we hear such constant demands. Such activity could not arouse any indignation on the part of the mistrustful Entente, and might well recover for us the lost sympathies of the whole world.

“The programme of the League of Nations Union cannot be agreeable to the radical German Parties of the Left and the Right. Radicalism of the Left hopes for a world revolution, which will sweep away the Peace of Versailles, while a reformed League would elevate democratic evolution into a dogma. Radicalism of the Right, on the other hand, believes that the League, with its tendencies towards international reconciliation, will deal a

death blow to nationalism and therewith to reaction. If in the meantime the flood of nationalism is to rise still further and engulf us, the Entente will not be so naive as to allow us to regain our strength, while we must bear steadily in mind that we have to regard the moral and economic rebirth of the German people as the chief aim of our policy. Otherwise we shall always be an object and not a subject of policy, and even the collapse of the Entente would not improve our position. Another consequence is that, now the Treaty has been signed, we must fulfil it to the best of our ability and conscience. So much is demanded by the loyalty and honesty which must be the watchword of our policy. But the League of Nations is a part of the Peace Treaty and, in spite of all its defects, it is still the best part, for it provides us with at least a hope, which is otherwise everywhere lacking in the Treaty. By the express provisions of the Peace of Versailles the League of Nations is to revise this peace from time to time. By entering the League we shall secure equality of rights with all nations. Only through such equality and reciprocity will it be possible to establish the world economic system that is essential for the restoration of international relations on a profitable basis. This system can only come to fruition within the foundation of the League, and only on this foundation can we cultivate such economic resources as may partially compensate us for the territories we have lost. The League of Nations must organise an international economic system into which Germany will be fitted, because our capacity for self support has been so imperilled by the Peace Treaty that it cannot be secured in any other fashion. This economic system must be an organisation of creative work. The utmost intensification of Germany's production is needed to secure its continuance. The same applies to all other countries. The idea of the economic community of all mankind and the expansion of free intercourse between all the nations of the earth must control the economic policy of the League of Nations.

"Most of our political ideals have been shattered by the world war. But we still whole-heartedly cling to the ideal conception of the unity of the German people, of which we have not been deprived. In the meantime the right of national self-determination is a fundamental principle within the idea of the League. Our adherence to this idea therefore gives us the right to demand that this same right of self-determination shall apply to us as well as to all the other nations, and on the basis of this idea we must compel even the most obstinate of our former foes to recognise the historic fact that the German people, so far as the German tongue is heard, is a national unity, which has only temporarily been shaken in the course of our history by dynastic policy."

At the time the League of Nations Union was founded I was very well aware that it could do but little work in Germany. The German is accustomed to leave policy and especially foreign policy to his Government, reserving to himself the right, later on, and usually when it is too late to avoid a blunder, of emptying the vials of his wrath on those who may be in power at the time. Neither the first, nor the second, nor the third Reich have been able to effect any change in this regrettable political attitude of mind. The next German Republic must, like the previous one, attempt to train the Germans to politics. Anyone who wants to learn to swim must first jump into the water. When I, as President, asked anyone to join the League of Nations Union I was almost invariably answered by the question: "What does the Foreign Ministry say about it?"

In the meantime a further task fell to be carried out by the Union, which in my view was the most important of all. The various unions were conjoined in a world association the functions of which are two: to discuss all questions with which the League of Nations deals, or will probably deal, and by continually changing the geographical location of its congress, to

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introduce the true concept of the League into all countries. Its organisation is modelled on that of the League, consisting as it does of a General Assembly, a General Council, and a permanent office. The latter was formerly domiciled at Brussels, it is now at Geneva.

The World Association asked our Union to join, and in 1921 invited us to a meeting of the General Council in Vienna, where the mutual social relations were entirely normal and correct. Although at the inter parliamentary conference at Stockholm the French and Belgians stayed away so as not to meet our delegates, at Vienna the French took occasion to be particularly friendly towards us, so that a number of quite frank and free conversations took place such as had not yet occurred at any of the international conferences since the war.

I then got the impression that the Austrian Government was well advised in applying for admission to the League. It was thus open to them to represent their interests more effectively than we were in a position to do. The League of Nations had indeed stood aside on all great political questions, but it did exist and was called upon to take important decisions. The fact that we remained obstinately outside it could not in any way improve the situation. It is essential for a State to be in a position to represent its interests. *Salus publica suprema lex.* If, when the Upper Silesian question was referred to the League, we had at once applied for admission, we should not now have to reproach ourselves with having neglected the most effective means of furthering our cause. It must occur to everyone that Poland, as a member of the League, can at Geneva influence the course of events in quite a different fashion from Germany, who is not there. *Les absents ont toujours tort,* says the French proverb. Moreover, in all League circles there was a strong sense of resentment against us because we were regarded as enemies of the League on principle and because we had not applied for admission. Such *imponderabilia* naturally also

affected the decisions of the League.

The course of the meeting of the World Association confirmed me in my decision to devote myself in future primarily to the work of the German Union and the Association—work that I regarded as of the highest importance for reconstruction and for German interests, especially on the question of national minorities. My position as President of our Union was very difficult, as this, like the Association, was a purely private body, which had, however, received the blessing of the Government at its birth.

This blessing was also a material one, in so far as the League received a subvention, without which, in the general impoverishment, it could not have lived. I, as President, had to steer a very delicate course between my own views, those of the Foreign Ministry, the Union and the Association. As a wit expressed it, the Foreign Ministry was naturally not going to hold a dog that bit its own legs. I have already referred to the then Minister Rosen as hostile to the whole idea of a League of Nations. He represented the standpoint that we ought not to have such a Union, as it would create the impression abroad that the German Government wanted to join the League of Nations.

In these conditions it is really a miracle that I managed to be President of the Union for ten years, and from time to time Vice-President and President of the Association, without ever becoming involved in serious conflict. I had indeed served under the Foreign Ministry for thirty years and maintained excellent and in some cases friendly relations with the officials there. Moreover, Stresemann soon came into power, and with him I worked in complete harmony until his much regretted death.

I mentioned above that the question of national minorities was one that engaged the special attention of the Union, which thus acquired a moral claim for support on the part of the Government. This question led to some very lively passages at

the Prague Congress of the Central Association, which almost resulted in the dissolution of that body, but the final result was that the Unions constituted themselves recognised guardians of the minorities

In the course of the Congress President Masaryk received us at the Hradschin, which is certainly one of the loveliest places on earth. I greatly looked forward to this meeting, as we had faced each other as foes on the political battlefield at Washington. The President did the right and courteous thing by a prompt and tactful reference to our Washington conflict. If only the whole world had then advanced so far as to respect the former enemy! Herr Masaryk seemed very well aware how nearly I had succeeded in preventing America from entering the war.

What a lovely city is Prague, with her churches and palaces, her blossoming acacias and her historic memories! And yet—it was perhaps just those memories of "ancient wars" that lent their colour to the Congress. Did the great picture of Huss before the Council of Constance, which presided over our sittings, rouse us to equally courageous candour? However this might be, opinions clashed at all our meetings with astonishing acerbity. The result, indeed, always was that the violence of a speech invariably turned to the advantage of the enemy. Just as the Czechs and Jugoslavs were beaten because they went too far, so it happened to the Greeks and Poles, when they fought so fanatically against the admission of the Turks, and the East and West Ukrainians, to the Association. The latter gradually developed into what the League of Nations should have been—a forum where the oppressed could bring their complaints. In committee, the acceptance of the Turks was almost refused because their treatment of Christians was disapproved. After the Greek delegate's philippic at the plenary session the acceptance was almost unanimous. The result was the same in the case of the Ukrainians, who were helped by the Poles in similar fashion.

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There was a moment when the whole Assembly found itself in undisturbed harmony, and that was when Professor Aulard submitted a resolution, in the name of the French delegation, that the admission of Germany to the League of Nations should be effected as soon as possible.

Thenceforward—from 1922—I went regularly to Geneva during the Assemblies of the League. I was anxious to complete my impressions of the League at its meeting-place. As President of the German Union it was important for me to acquaint myself with the atmosphere of Geneva in person, and for this purpose I could also count on getting into touch with leading personalities on the spot. At the outset I there gained the painful impression that we were still barred by the public opinion of the outside world. Immediately after my return from Geneva, I addressed the General Meeting of the Party at Elberfeld on the subject of Germany's entry into the League, to the following effect:

"I am very well aware that the latest decisions on foreign policy have had to be taken intuitively and *in camera caritatis* by the Minister responsible. The deeper problems of this policy are not indeed suited for public discussion. However, in a democracy every citizen should be guided by the available data on which these problems depend. In the present case it is commonly held abroad that the main reason why Germany has not joined the League of Nations is because public opinion in this country is against such a step. I will not for the moment consider whether this view is correct or not; in any event it exists, and our public opinion is thereby burdened with a responsibility that it cannot bear, without giving proper consideration to the question. I cannot indeed admit that the question of Germany's entry into the League exercises a decisive influence on the deepest problem of foreign policy—the question whether it should be directed towards the West or the East. The League to-day is not yet a super-State organisation; it is merely a means to

diplomatic and political negotiation. Nor again can I admit that the Rapallo Treaty has affected the main problem above mentioned, or even prejudiced any future decision in the matter. The Rapallo Treaty is a treaty of peace and commerce, and in this regard it may be designated a model. If it were more, if it did actually involve an Eastern orientation of our policy, it would have been a gross political error, for it must be obvious to everyone that the solution of the Reparations question—our most pressing need—would be impossible if we directed our policy towards the East. Our public opinion must clearly realise that we must first solve the Reparations problem, and to this end we must make a greater diplomatic and political effort, for our position in the world can only be secured in this fashion. Our aim cannot be achieved wholly by economic methods. That we can learn from due and careful study of the Bismarckian diplomacy, though of course his decisions on certain questions were conditioned historically and cannot, therefore, be used for our guidance to-day. Our economic distress, great as it is, must not prevent us realising that diplomatic work must be done to recover our position in the world.

"The question of our entry into the League has become a matter to be faced, because England has repeatedly invited us to join, and because the strongest Party in the Reichstag, the Social Democrats, has appealed to the Government by resolution to pursue such a policy as will lead to our joining the League. The latter at its last meeting expressed its readiness in advance to take over the Reparations problem, and had thereby recognised for the first time the chief task with which it had been originally charged, namely, the revision of the peace treaties that might from time to time be needed. Whether this constitutes a step in advance, future negotiations must decide. But it will not do that Germany should be again condemned unheard on a matter vital to her existence, as occurred over the Upper Silesian decision. If we had then been represented on the

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League, with equal rights, a decision more in our favour would have been given, perhaps only slightly so, but certainly better than one accompanied by a condemnation *in contumacia*, we had preserved but a few thousand Germans from the <sup>m.</sup> <sub>nd</sub> choly fate of a Polish yoke, even that would have justified joining the League. <sup>elan-point</sup>

"The question of the League can be considered from the of view of pacifism, international law and policy. <sup>military</sup>

"Pacifism, as was natural enough in a nation subject to military training, has found little acceptance in Germany. It is completely discredited, because it succeeded neither in shortening the war nor in shaping the peace treaties nor the League in accordance with its ideals. The politician, therefore, even though he may himself regard pacifism as the ideal, cannot forgo it, since we are beset on every side by imperialism. But we must not therefore despise pacifism, any more than we should attach less value to religion as an ideal, because injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount are not regarded as binding commandments in our daily conflicts. Pacifist views are increasing among all peoples. We did not understand this before the war, and as a result we pursued a policy of obstruction, arbitration and disarmament questions that won us the reputation of regarding war as the ideal instrument of policy. If we had not had this reputation, the War Guilt question would have been very differently viewed, nor would it have been possible for us to array the whole world, and especially America, against us. Our contempt for pacifism therefore did us a great deal of harm and was perhaps actually answerable for our defeat. The statesmen of the Entente have always paid homage to pacifism, because they were forced to make this concession to the public opinion of their countries, even while they supported imperialist measures. While Turkey of to-day, financed and armed by the Power of the Entente against the rest, was able to shatter <sup>one</sup> <sub>is</sub> senseless porcelain peace of Sèvres, unarmed German

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further maltreated under the terms of the equally senseless Peace of Versailles. On that account, pacifism is not an adequate ground on which to base our own proposal for admission to the League. However, we must not bring upon ourselves the odium under which we laboured before the war.

'With the extension of international law through the League, that is to say with the organisation of the idea of justice, every German will be in agreement, but those who oppose our adhesion to the League take the view that it would greatly hamper us in the freedom of our decisions. This, in my opinion, involves an overestimate of the League as existing to-day. We see how little other States have allowed themselves to be hampered by the League. As a result of the provision for unanimity, and the general political situation, the League is at present merely an assemblage of diplomats at which more or less important questions are discussed and partly decided. Only in the forms of admission does the League in any way differ from other diplomatic conferences.

"Political motives are the sole decisive ones in this present question. Important German interests will be neglected if we are not represented at Geneva. Admitting all the misdeeds of the League up to date, it must be borne in mind that the Entente has caused just such a succession of outrages to be committed upon us by the Supreme Council, the Reparations Commission, the Ambassadors Conference, or whatever all these estimable bodies may be called. None the less, we must negotiate with them, for any other procedure would be suicide. We must guard our interests and fight for our rights. The fight for our rights is the watchword of German policy. If we accept the invitation to Genoa I cannot see why we should not, for the same reasons, accept England's invitation to Geneva. We only need to answer that we are willing, provided that England will take care that our admission to the League is conducted with proper dignity. From my impressions of Geneva, there can be no doubt

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that our admission will meet with no difficulties, and also be accorded a seat on the League Council. The concluding speech made this clear when he said, and intention that no State which had applied for ever yet been rejected. Even if France should no opposition, that would be no reason for withdrawal for acceptance. A sound foreign policy must, in aims, be directed towards an ideal, but in actual main point is to get one's adversary into the wrong into the right. If France hindered the expansionisation of international law, the odium would fall not on us. And that would be in itself a political

"The oppressed minorities abroad, and all of them cut off from their native land, are most anxious to enter, so that they may have a spokesman at Geneva. It may be thought about the Geneva assemblage, that there is doubt that nowhere else in the world is so much exercised on public opinion as there. When Waldeck-Rousseau in his brilliant swan-song in the Reichstag, told the miseries of the Saarlanders, I could not help wondering what different the effect would have been had the speech been made at Geneva. To-day the speeches of German statesmen, in garbled form or not at all, our newspapers even in a psychosis still subjects our statesmen to its bar. We should use every opportunity to get every German to a hearing."

Whatever may have been the German Government's intention, the attempt was not made, by entering the League, to prevent the French invasion and solve the question. It can no longer be said whether Poincaré's policy was none the less carried out his raid on Germany in violation of the Treaty, but all friendly disposed English people held the view that the proceeding suggested would have

the invasion. It is difficult to-day to grasp that the inflation in its worst manifestations might have been spared us by this means. However this may be, the aspect of politics was for the time being altered. The entry of Germany into the League, which was a pressing need two years before, and one year before was still very desirable and quite possible, became impossible, being barred by Article I of the League Covenant. We could, according to the English view, have urged in reply to the charge that we had not kept the treaties, that France had violated the legalities of the position by the invasion of the Ruhr, but the actual fact of non fulfilment on our part would not thereby have been removed.

The case of Corfu, which was then being dealt with by the League, was extremely instructive to us, because, *mutatis mutandis*, our position was the same. The relation of a weak State like Greece to the Italian policy of force was exactly similar to ours towards France, if no third party intervened, Greece would have to suffer the loss of Corfu. In the same way we could not eject the French from the occupied German territories. There was indeed a strong minority in France which preferred to take money rather than to annex territory, but even this minority concurred in the imperialistic methods of the Poincaré Government, because French public opinion was now obsessed by the belief that we were dishonest debtors. The question was therefore insoluble in our case, too, without the intervention of a third party. The attempt at a direct agreement with France failed, and inevitably failed, moreover, it will continue to prove futile, because French Imperialism is not disposed to make any agreement possible. It was always maintained in France that the German Republic was there regarded with sympathy, but France did in fact drive the German nation into the arms of reaction. Was it perhaps anticipated that reaction would weaken Germany even more than Napoleon I had done? However the German Government may be constituted, it will

always have to rely on English mediation, with or without the League of Nations.

As a result of the Dawes Plan and its acceptance, the picture again changed. In the Reichstag I spoke in the name of my Party in favour of acceptance. In so doing I was quite clear that the pacification of the world called for a firmer foundation than could be constructed by means of a purely economic agreement. I was equally in no doubt of England's intention to charge the League of Nations with the construction of such a foundation. On that account it was the business of the central Parties to secure that Germany should revise its attitude towards the League. The aversion generally felt in Germany towards the League was quite understandable in view of its achievements up to date, but it was based none the less on a fundamental error. All the accusations brought against the League proceed from the assumption that it is a super-State Court, the duty of which is to improve the world from motives of political idealism, and if it fails to do so it is to be regarded merely as an organised hypocrisy. But as a matter of fact the League is only an assemblage of diplomats who act according to instructions, a sort of mirror in which we may see the reflection of the momentary balance of political forces. We may therefore be quite sure that over any concrete question we shall come off just as well or just as ill as we should have done before any other international conference. At the meetings of the League of Nations Union it was clearly laid down that neither the Unions nor the League itself thought of the realisation of a pacifist ideal, but merely desired to co-operate in the solution of concrete questions, though success naturally depended on whether the time was ripe or not for a pacification of the world. Thus, the League of Nations is to be regarded only as a means and not as an end in itself. In that year 1924, the Congress of League of Nations Unions had a special significance, because this was the first occasion since the war

on which a German delegation was invited to France in a normal way, and because the Congress took place at Lyons, a city that is so much the spiritual counterpart of M. Herriot, its Mayor for many years, who had entered upon Poincaré's inheritance as Premier of France.

The population of Lyons, the Press, and the foreign delegations all regarded the presence of a German mission as the most important event of the Congress, and repeatedly said so. No one of us Germans met with the slightest unpleasantness. Our reception was from the beginning courteous, and courtesy gradually increased to friendliness, so that at the great reception on the last evening the atmosphere was such as had been usual at international congresses before the war. It was clear that our hosts were at first a little nervous that there might be incidents, but all risk of this was avoided by our leaving the arrangements entirely to the French, who managed the speeches and invitations with such tact that, as I have mentioned, feelings of real friendliness gradually prevailed. We naturally had to make our own contribution, but this we found easy, from which it is obvious that we were dealing throughout with a new France and not with that of Poincaré. Without indulging in any illusions, I was in fact surprised that we were offered so many opportunities for intimate discussions with the most various circles of French society. Though this was not to imply any political success, our own vision of the needs of the day was broadened.

For the France with which we came in contact, the disarmament question was in the foreground of interest, then followed the desire for Reparations, while all other problems came into consideration only as means to an end. I was accordingly able to say in my public speech and in the many interviews that I was asked to give, without contradiction, that we on our side demanded the evacuation of the territory occupied in excess of the Peace of Versailles, and a complete amnesty for the martyrs of passive resistance. I had previously emphasised that

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Germany was a Republic and desired to remain so, that we were completely disarmed, in so far as international relations were concerned, and that the Reparations question was settled by our acceptance of the Dawes Report. It was also necessary to mention the German Nationalist demonstrations, as these were brought up against us again and again. I took the opportunity to point out that a defeated and dismembered nation was naturally subject to attacks of nationalism. The French and the English knew from their own experiences that after a revolution a country did not calm down so quickly as might perhaps be wished.

At Lyons we were at any rate enabled to see for ourselves how much all sections of the French nation were dominated by the fear of another war. Everyone returned again and again to this subject, and did not become friendly until it was made clear that even our nationalists did not contemplate a war. The French rather naively divided our people into pacifists and nationalists, and it was not easy to make them understand that an approach to the German nation could only be useful and lasting if it was not solely based on pacifists. At Lyons, too, we were confronted with the old conflict as to the meaning of pacifism, as the President of the Congress, the former Dutch Finance Minister Treub, in his opening speech said straight out that he was not a pacifist. He took his stand on the view, which the German Union subsequently adopted, that the aim of the League of Nations and the League of Nations Unions—for the time being at any rate—was not to realise the ideal of eternal peace, but to solve concrete questions in a peaceful diplomatic fashion.

The Congress urged that Germany should be admitted to the League and provided with a permanent seat on the Council. On this resolution I adopted the same standpoint that I have always put forward in my speeches and writings at home. I said that the moment for Germany's entry seemed to have come, now that England and France wished it, and the settlement of the Reparations question made it desirable. At the same time it

would be better that our entry into the League should be envisaged as the crowning act of a general and fundamental agreement. A previous proposal by Germany might perhaps merely give rise to fresh difficulties. But when the above mentioned questions had all been disposed of, England and France, in conjunction with Italy and Japan, would certainly possess enough influence in the League to secure our acceptance and the establishment of a new permanent seat on the Council. The last point was regarded by German public opinion as of decisive importance. These observations were also greeted with applause by the Assembly, which in general gave a very friendly reception to my speeches. This impression was strengthened by the replies of the French and Belgian representatives. However astonishing this might be to a German, it was undeniable that even those among the French who were disposed to an understanding presupposed an entire absence of good will on our part in all disputed questions. They argued more or less in the sense that Erzberger and Rathenau were murdered because they showed themselves inclined towards an understanding, and that since then no honest man has, for good reasons, been willing to follow in their footsteps. They were amazed and incredulous when they were told that we honestly intended to carry out the Dawes Report, and were rather taken aback by the assurance that the chance of an understanding had been defeated by Poincaré's policy, which had prevented any success at Cannes and Genoa, and wrecked all such prospects by the invasion of the Ruhr; for though they condemned Poincaré's policy and showed as much at the elections, they excused it by their assumption of ill will on the part of Germany. This being the prevailing atmosphere, what was called moral disarmament was still a very long way off. Contacts, like those at Lyons, could do much, but they were difficult to repeat. Even then, the position of both the French and German Governments was still too weak to allow of the leading men in either country to compromise themselves too

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deeply with the advocates of conciliation in the other country. For the time being there was a mutual distrust of the good will of either side. It was, therefore, urgent that both should prove their good will in practice, and for that purpose the first essential was to discover the feelings of the other side. France of those days did not intend to take the Rhine from us; but had the spirit of Poincaré been definitely overcome?

The Congress of Lyons was, taking it all round, the most successful general assembly of the Unions at which I was present, and we gratefully acknowledged Premier Herriot's telegram that referred to the Association as the "élite of the world." The meeting of the League that took place soon after was the most important that had hitherto been held. It produced the Geneva Protocol, and the disposition of German policy towards the League.

The Geneva Protocol was to provide France with the desired "security," and for that purpose Germany was needed. Our entry into the League of Nations could then be regarded as secured. "Better late than never," in Livy's phrase, could be truly said by anyone who shared my view that we could better represent our interests inside than outside the League. Had the result been different, the performance would have had to be described as a Geneva Tragedy of Errors. It was in fact a comedy that was performed there, with the title "All's Well That Ends Well." The management functioned so badly that the spectator must have got the impression that all the chief actors were doing their best to prevent Germany's admission, whereas the majority were, on the contrary, most anxious that she should be admitted.

The prelude to the performance was the "Henley Misunderstanding." This arose out of a luncheon party, upon the occasion of the signature of the London Protocol, given by Lord Parmoor at his Henley country house to Marx and Stresemann, when Germany's admission to the League was to be arranged.

The arrangements somehow went wrong, and the English Government believed that we were prepared for the beginning of the first act in Geneva, whereas in Germany the opposite conviction prevailed, i.e. that the performance would not take place until the following year. MacDonald assumed from his semi official information that his warm hearted invitation would produce an immediate echo in Germany. Instead of which the reply was delayed for three weeks because nobody expected the invitation. It seems even more surprising that the French were not prepared. They were completely taken aback by the English Premier's speech. However, Herriot promptly recovered and at once poured water into the English wine, he was more especially excited by the fact that MacDonald had discussed the Guilt question in our sense and had criticised the Upper Silesian decision of the League. An able management, which was working for Germany's admission to the League, instead of allowing this interlude, which naturally inclined us to an attitude of reserve, would have addressed identical statements of both Great Powers to Berlin, which should have been simultaneously supported by appropriate action on the part of both Ambassadors in Berlin. Then Germany's admission would have been at once secured. There would, of course, still have been difficulties at Geneva, but they would not have survived in the atmosphere that there prevailed. It is not to be denied that France and her unconditional supporters would have preferred to postpone Germany's entry in order to await the results of the pending enquiry as to our disarmament, and to confront us with an accomplished fact on the question of security. In the meantime the Geneva Assembly was very anxious to see Germany in its midst; all through the month of September the absent party had been the chief character, on account of that very question of security, as it was obvious to any unprejudiced person that the presence of the party against whom security is demanded was indispensable. On that account the Assembly would have put

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aside all opposition if we had promptly and affectionately dropped into MacDonald's arms. However, the blunder of the management lay just in the fact that they presupposed a feeling that did not exist in Germany, and after what had passed, could not exist. It is an object lesson in the fact that we are not the only ones to make psychological blunders in our judgment of foreign nations.

If there was really a desire to see us at Geneva in 1924, the ground should have been carefully prepared in Germany, where the difficulties were greater than within the League. The vanquished is naturally more sensitive than the victor. On that account Herriot should also have sought a different audience when, with the best intentions, he wanted to take a public opportunity of toning down the harshness of his speeches. The correspondent of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, or an assemblage of all the German Press representatives, would have been much more suitable than our Champions of Human Rights, including Professor Forster. On the French side it was said that this interview was natural enough, as everybody turns first to their friends. But in the terms of the French proverb it is futile to *précher à un converti*. Attempts at conversion should be directed at the unconverted, and if reconciliation is sought, it is a mistake to approach circles that are regarded with suspicion in their native land, because they pursue a policy of reconciliation far too rapidly and with far too great national self-denial. Every sensible politician will desire to effect a rapprochement between Germany and France. On this hope is based the future of Europe. But reconciliation can only take place if on both sides the principle is recognised that an honourable struggle must be followed by an honourable reconciliation.

It was indeed a courageous act on the part of MacDonald to raise the question of War Guilt, as in fact he did. It is my view, however, that this question should be dealt with by historians and not politicians, since it has no practical value. It was solely

because we were defeated that we had to acquiesce in the solution of the Reparations question through the London Protocol. Our burdens would not be diminished by one pfennig, nor our territory enlarged by one square centimetre, if the whole world were to recognise the historic truth that there could be no moral guilt in a world war, since the age of imperialism did not recognise the idea. Before the war, all Powers practised imperialism of such a kind that the ultimate explosion was inevitable. The deciding question merely was which States should pursue their imperialist policy with most astuteness and they proved the victors. But the catastrophe was so great that the victors also suffered acutely, and it was as a reaction against this crazy imperialism that the idea of the League of Nations arose, with its new morality. At Geneva this new code dominates the movement of ideas, but in the sphere of world politics it is still bitterly contested by imperialist politicians of the type of Poincaré. The destiny of Europe lies in the hands of the League, which, with the co-operation of Germany, must develop into an instrument of peace and justice if it is ever to gain the confidence of the world which it does not at present possess.

Even at the time of the League Assembly at Geneva there could be no possible doubt that this arrangement was calculated to solve the question of security. On that account alone were we summoned so urgently to Geneva. Even if we had not missed this opportunity, the security question could not then have been solved because England, having regard to her colonies, could not sign the Geneva Protocol. However, the discussion would have got under way. No steps were taken until Stresemann grasped the initiative that led to Locarno. It was with great courage that he again resumed the policy of fulfilment, and with equal astuteness he invented a new name for it, so as to secure the backing of a wider German front. I took no part in these negotiations, but I supported Stresemann in the Reichstag and did my best to urge him forward. I conceived it to be an illusion

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to believe that the French would ever evacuate the left bank of the Rhine without previous "security." On that account the main task of our Government then lay within the sphere of foreign politics; and it was the solution of the "Security question" in a form acceptable to Germany.

From the moment when Stresemann took over the Foreign Ministry, Germany was once more on the up-grade. It has always been the same. It is due to our central position that in all the course of German history, our fortunes, good or ill, have always been determined by our foreign policy.

At the time of the negotiations regarding "security," a Congress of the League of Nations Unions was held at Warsaw. In view of the tariff war with Poland, the time and place were not what we would have chosen. It must, however, be admitted that the reception of the German delegation in no way suffered thereby; it was, indeed, extremely friendly, and showed up Polish hospitality in a most favourable light. But it would be a fallacy to draw any conclusions from that fact regarding the relations between the two countries in actual practice. The German minority in Poland had to be protected, while the Corridor and Upper Silesia remained bleeding wounds. So much might however, be said without fear of exaggeration, that in Polish circles at Warsaw there was an increase in the number of those who realised the necessity of maintaining friendly relations with their Western neighbour.

The feeling within the Congress clearly testified that the relaxation of tension had made notable progress since the London Protocol and especially since the "security" negotiations. The reputation of Germany had been decisively raised by our handling of the security question; on the one hand there was a deepening confidence in our sincerity, and on the other, the fact that the hitherto most important step towards the pacification of the world had come from us, sensibly increased German prestige. I took the opportunity to explain to the assembly that our

objections to Article 16 of the League Covenant would always return so long as general disarmament was not carried out. This was the ultimate end and the main content of the conception of a League of Nations. We were not seeking a pretext in Article 16 for postponing our entry into the League, but we were seriously concerned lest a completely disarmed Germany, which could not even defend its own frontiers, might become a battlefield for her heavily armed neighbours. On that account we must continue to bring this matter forward either before or after our admission to the League. Security and Arbitration treaties had no practical value unless they led to general disarmament.

The General Assembly of the League which met in the autumn of 1925 was in an awkward position in so far as it had—partly with reluctance—to follow the leadership of the Great Powers, and could only discuss the main question without attempting a solution. The League suggested a company of infantry marking time before it begins the ceremonial march. As a result a certain ill humour became observable, at which only visionaries could have been surprised, and which came to a head in the following spring at the most unfortunate moment.

Apart from this, there was a notable decrease of tension, due to the conduct of German foreign policy during the previous year. The German, although present in a merely private capacity, was no longer the enemy to be avoided, but the fellow European to be cultivated because he was indispensable for the pacification of the Continent.

From the same flower the bee sucks honey and the spider poison. German enemies of the League said that the General Assembly had again completely failed because it had done nothing, or merely committed what was plainly a violation of justice, in the Danzig and Minorities questions. That is not to be denied, but on the other hand, these matters could never meet with adequate attention unless Germany was there to take part in the discussion. In assemblies of diplomats—and it is quite illusory to

regard the League in other light—all questions are settled by way of compromise: in Geneva, by compromises between power and justice, often in favour of the former, and often of the latter. This can hardly be otherwise, and when the party mainly interested is absent, the dogs bite him. When on one occasion at Geneva I said to a prominent French delegate that his friends the Poles and the Czechs were treating the German minorities abominably and in contravention of their treaty obligations, he merely replied: "You had better join the League and say that here in public. We can help the man that we can see."

Anyone who conceives the German position at Geneva as an easy one is sorely mistaken. To say anything that will be heard with acceptance simultaneously at Geneva and in Germany may be compared to the art of squaring the circle. *Mutatis mutandis*, Count Apponyi was master of this art, but the Hungarians are abler politicians than ourselves and understand better how to howl with the wolves in order to achieve their ends. They accordingly joined the League of Nations long before we did. The League is nothing if it does not stand for justice, and if we are to be told, as was Count Apponyi, that we too had occupied a glass house in the matter of minorities, the answer is easy: "Our enemies made war upon us on the pretext that their morality was higher than ours. Now prove it; we are waiting. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta.*" The way to the United States of Europe leads through contented minorities and the removal of Customs barriers.

In the meantime all was set upon Locarno, and Locarno, unlike Versailles, was a genuine conclusion of peace; but inadequate use was made of the prevailing feeling to clear away all memories of the war. We should have dealt with our former enemies on the principle of the English proverb about "making hay while the sun shines." None the less, Locarno was a turning-point of great significance. After Versailles the victors were just as dissatisfied as the vanquished. When the struggle was over

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no *Te Deum* of gratitude for success was sung from thankful hearts, men were merely thankful that the bloodshed and the destruction were at an end. Wilson was universally and every where exalted, because he represented the pacifist ideal, which he certainly did not understand how to realise.

If the question is asked why the war went on so long, the answer may well lie in the fact that the leading men everywhere were afraid of the alleged public opinion that they themselves were partly responsible for calling into existence. With this, too, the problem of war guilt is closely involved. In former days no statesman would have hesitated to bear the consequences of his policy if it had led to a victorious peace. But to-day every Government is struggling to avoid any responsibility for the appalling conditions that have resulted from the war and the peace.

These considerations were naturally not quite so clearly realised at first. The peace was dictated in accordance with out worn ideas, which guided all the activities that followed, since it was believed possible to extract so much out of the vanquished as would subsequently justify the policy of war. The truth that the vanquished would neither then nor at anytime be in a position to pay the colossal war bill could not then be recognised, lest the nations might realise too soon that they had been led by the nose during the war. It was not until these same outward methods led to the utter madness of the Ruhr invasion that the situation was reached which the French themselves have described in their own proverb: *L'excès du mal en devient le remède.*

The German opponents of Locarno attacked us who supported it with the argument that anyone who could be enthusiastic about Locarno must be sorely deluded. The treaty, with all its juridical clauses, was certainly not calculated to awaken enthusiasm, but the question was indeed one of life or death. Hamlet may cherish thoughts of suicide, but a nation must live. It would have been crazy if we in our position had expected to

pursue a foreign policy that aroused enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is an emanation of the emotions, policy of the reason. How often was this preached by Bismarck! We expected from Locarno nothing but the creation of an atmosphere in which Germany, respected in the Council of the nations, could work for her own recovery and that of Europe. Stresemann proved that even a disarmed Germany could play a leading part in European politics, because our central position was then just as much our strength as it had been hitherto our weakness. Europe is dependent on us as we on Europe. The recognition of such facts is to-day called the spirit of Locarno. On this occasion our former enemies made it as difficult as possible for the German Republic to enable the spirit of Locarno to prevail in Germany. The extraordinary March session of the League Assembly, at which Germany was to be admitted, ended, as is well known, in an utter fiasco, for which those in control of the League must bear the blame.

Such a crisis was to be expected over Germany's admission, but it was natural to assume that it would not come to a head until after she had joined. It was inevitable, owing to the latent antagonism between the large and small States, and the aversion felt at Geneva for Locarno, which it was there felt had been imposed on the League; but mainly because Germany's entry into the League completely changed its character. Until then, as one of the best-known delegates of the small States said to me, it had been an agreeable club, or more correctly, an association of the victor States, which conceived its task as the maintenance of the peace treaties, whereas, on the contrary, the League was expressly created for their modification. Of this, Baker's book on Wilson gives incontestable proof. Whatever may be thought of Wilson otherwise, he is the founder of the League, which but for him would not exist. He must therefore have known best for what purpose he brought his child into the world. This distinction of views must once for all be made plain, because it lies

behind all plans for the reform of the League, and explains the desire of every State for a seat on the Council. Our Government was right to adhere to Locarno, and thereby to make possible an internal and external reform of the League. It must be upheld, if for no other reason, because it binds England to the Continent of Europe. We have only to recall the parliamentary debates on Locarno, where all Parties were agreed that a voluntary isolation of England was no longer feasible owing to her League policy.

None the less, I did not doubt that our entry would mean continued conflict until we had gained a secure position on the League, and that our delegates would, to begin with, have a by no means enviable or easy task. I have often given expression to this view both orally and in my writings, such was the state of affairs at the outset in the World Association of League Unions, though there was more of the true League atmosphere than in the Geneva institution.

Just because I fully recognised the difficulties, I would gladly have obtained our admission at the time when MacDonald had aroused an appropriate enthusiasm, which in my view would have overcome all obstacles. At that time, the League, by the production of the Geneva Protocol, was working for the solution of the Security question, and sorely needed our co-operation. Whether we could have brought the Protocol into a more acceptable shape is of course another question, but in any case the League then needed us in its own interests.

After MacDonald's appeal had died away without reply, no other comparable way remained open for the pacification of the world, for the Geneva Protocol miscarried owing to England's opposition, the enthusiasm had fled, and in its place an atmosphere of depression set in at Geneva. At the time of the next General Assembly it was very obvious that Locarno had few friends at Geneva, where it was felt to have been a snub to the League.

None the less, it was reasonable to assume that the long

preliminary negotiations, with all the safeguards achieved, offered a guarantee for Germany's admission at a time to be agreed. If the result fell out otherwise, the responsibility lies with the leading members of the League. The League has always functioned smoothly when England and France were in complete agreement at the outset. Otherwise, as on that occasion, intrigues were to be expected, which contradicted the idea of the League and proved that we were still living in the age of imperialism. If Briand and Chamberlain had dealt faithfully in the spirit of Locarno, they would have joined in putting aside all aspirations put forward to the League until Germany had been admitted. Such an attitude was the only one worthy of the Powers who alleged they had carried on the war against us on behalf of the sanctity of treaties. It was also the only practical policy, since all the States who were labouring to get seats on the Council, permanent or otherwise, would have had an interest in getting Germany admitted as speedily as possible. But Briand became involved with Poland, and Chamberlain gave way to him, notwithstanding the opposition in England, where the League of Nations Union in particular carried on a magnificent struggle for "fair play."

Once again victory remained with those who did not intend to bestow peace upon the world, and the progress of Europe was again held up for many months.

The Congress of the World Association of League of Nations Unions was to be held that same year at Dresden, but in view of the failure of the March session of the League it did not seem opportune that the place of meeting should be in Germany. The strongest and most active of all the Unions, the English one, sprang into the breach, and invited the Association to come to London and to Aberystwith, in Wales. The preparatory committees sat in the metropolis, and the general meeting was held at the pleasant Welsh seaside resort.

The peregrinations of the Central Association to the different

countries was always providing new impressions, but none were so strong as those of Aberystwith. We were indeed always received with friendliness and hospitality everywhere, but such generous hospitality, and such sympathy on the part of all classes of the population, we never met with in the same degree as in Wales. While we were still in London, Lords Cecil, Parmoor, and Gladstone did indeed show their interest in the Congress by arranging various social gatherings. But anyone who knows the English capital realises that, owing to its size and its manifold occupations, only very unusual events arouse any widespread interest. At Aberystwith, on the other hand, the whole town turned out to do us honour, and the streets as well as the railway station were lavishly decked with flags. Mayor and Councillors arrayed in their historic garb awaited us on the platform, when the admirable special train placed at our disposal drew in. Our whole visit passed off in similar fashion. The population greeted our arrival with applause and watched our negotiations with extreme interest.

At the public meeting which was arranged, so many people attended that the hall, which provided seating accommodation for three thousand, was overfull. A large section of the international Press, in reporting this meeting, followed its usual habit of laying special stress on the so-called incident that I have already mentioned above, which took place before my speech, when the chairman was introducing me. A single individual shouted something from the back of the hall. What he said did not reach the chairman's table, but it appeared subsequently that he had shouted out: "What about the *Lusitania*?" In any case the man was led away at once, and his voice drowned in lively applause. Such a thing may happen at any public assembly. Moreover, the effect on the audience was so much in my favour that a humorous and somewhat cynical delegate observed that I had obviously learnt from certain famous examples and arranged for a trifling attack upon me to take place, so as to gain the good

will of my audience. My speech did indeed meet with an extraordinarily friendly reception, though I presented our point of view with the greatest possible candour.

Anyone who has been at all concerned with the League knows that the conception has more friends in England than in any other country. None the less the attitude of the Welsh population was for all of us a pleasant surprise. No one would have believed that the interest among the large masses of the inhabitants and especially among the students would be so great, though of course I do not overlook the fact that local patriotism and the tourist industry also played their part. Such motives, though never wholly absent, may be, in comparison, left out of account.

A second surprise to us was the prominence of the Welsh racial character and sentiment. The speakers always referred to themselves as the representatives of a small nation. They often spoke in their own Celtic language, which is apparently far more in common use than the Plattdeutsch in Schleswig-Holstein. I have never met with a bilingualism so peacefully disposed, except perhaps in the French territories of Canada. At the meetings, the Welsh national hymn was always sung as well as "God Save the King." And the Celtic songs, sacred and otherwise, gave us frequent pleasure.

The general impression was of a contented and loyal minority persisting for centuries within a strong State, which confers liberty because it is conscious of its own attractive force. This experience made a particular impression on all delegates, and moved me in my public speech to instance Wales as a model for the solution of the Minorities question. As the Roman Empire used to do, the British Empire allows complete freedom to every racial culture.

This Congress of the Unions was the last at which I was able to take a really energetic part. I was indeed present at the Berlin Congress of the following year, and actually presided in Madrid,

but I had to leave the preliminaries and details to others, for in the meantime, as mentioned above, I had taken over the Disarmament negotiations within the League, and in this work I was almost wholly absorbed for five years. However, the Berlin Congress of the Unions was a complete success with the co-operation of Marx and Stresemann. The solemn opening session took place before a large audience in the Plenary Assembly chamber of the Reichstag, with the well known French historian Aulard in the Presidential chair. I welcomed the company and in the course of my speech remarked that that day, like the day of Germany's admission to the League of Nations, was the crown of many years of work. On my first appearance at a central Congress six years before, there were but few in Germany who were in favour of our joining the League. And now the German League of Nations Union consisted of representatives from all the great Parties in the Reichstag, from which it might be recognised that Germany was sincerely co-operating with the League. The Central Association, as an advance-guard of the League, strove for an ideal. As a private organisation, subject to no form of dictation, its task was to stimulate the League. It must also criticise it, of course. One of the main ambitions of the Central Association was that the phrase '*Justitia fundamentum regnum*' should apply to the League of Nations.

For six successive years I served on the delegations to the League Assemblies: three times with Stresemann, once with Chancellor Hermann Müller, when Stresemann's health had already given way, and twice with Curtius. The climax of that time was the autumn of 1926, when Germany entered the League of Nations, and the Thoiry meeting took place immediately afterwards. Stresemann then seemed to be still quite healthy physically, and was politically at the height of his powers, while Briand was full of hope of overcoming his French adversaries, though he had the experience of Cannes and Genoa behind him, which was, unfortunately, again repeated after Thoiry. Both

statesmen felt confidence in each other, so far as is possible for politicians of different nations, and Sir Austen Chamberlain gladly played the honest broker, which has indeed mostly been England's role since Versailles.

With the latter of the three Locarno statesmen, to-day the last survivor, I had a long interview on one of the first evenings of the General Assembly at Geneva, but of a historical and not a political character. We met at one of the great receptions, and Chamberlain greeted me with great cordiality. I told him that I was pleasantly surprised that he had recognised me again, as twenty years had passed since I had seen him last at Highbury, his father's country seat. When I was Counsellor of Embassy in London, my wife and I went to Birmingham for a musical festival, conducted by Felix Weingartner. On the free Sunday we went to see Joseph Chamberlain at his country house, and inspected his famous orchids in his company. He was then the greatest political figure in England, but unfortunately ill-disposed to Germany on account of our refusal of his offer of alliance, which is even to-day a subject of dispute among historians. To us personally he was extremely friendly on the occasion of our visit. After I had reminded his son Austen of this meeting, he was greatly interested, and talked to me for half an hour with much animation, while the other guests were wondering what kind of problem we were engaged in solving. Historians may continue to debate Joseph Chamberlain's famous offer of alliance; his son Austen is in any case convinced that there would have been no world war if we had listened to his father, whose memory he plainly holds in very high esteem.

After permanently taking over the Disarmament negotiations, I was entrusted by our Foreign Ministry with the charge of certain other questions connected with the League, as for instance the reorganisation of the Secretariat, and especially the question of Palestine.

To write on all these matters is not an easy task, as they are still

pending at present. As regards Disarmament I shall have my observations to make in their proper place, but only as affecting the period during which I was in charge of the negotiations. I am content to leave the conclusion of them *d qui de droit*.

The reorganisation of the Secretariat is doomed to remain always pending. It is with this question as with history, according to Treitschke, of which he says that every epoch would be justified in rewriting it. The prevailing influence in the League always wants to remodel the Secretariat accordingly.

Finally, as regards the German Pro-Palestina Committee, of which I became chairman in 1926 at the desire of the Foreign Ministry, I have addressed many speeches to meetings on the subject. I discussed it in most detail in the course of a speech at Hamburg in 1930, which I may perhaps here quote, as giving a clear presentment of my attitude.

"As President of the German Pro Palestina Committee I have the honour to open this meeting and to offer you my heartiest thanks for attending in such numbers. More especially would I thank my friend Herr Bürgermeister Petersen for coming here to-day.

'The Pro Palestina Committee was formed with the warm support of the Reich Government, and leading members of all Parties are members of it, so that we may claim to have behind us the accredited representatives of the Government and of German public opinion. Our programme runs. The German Pro Palestina Committee, in the conviction that the establishment of a home for the Jewish people as contemplated by the Palestine Mandate, as a work of human welfare and civilisation, has a claim on German sympathies and the active interest of German Jews, will do its utmost to instruct German public opinion regarding the Jewish colonisation work in Palestine, to cultivate relations between Germany and Palestine, and generally to spread a recognition of the fact that the constructive work of the Jews in Palestine is a magnificent instrument for the economic

and cultural development of the Orient, for the expansion of German economic relations, and the reconciliation of the nations.'

"I may perhaps be permitted to add a few words of a personal nature. I would remind you that I have come here to stand before you as President of the Pro-Palestina Committee because I was Ambassador in Constantinople during the second half of the war. The idea of the constitution of a national home for the Jews in Palestine did not suddenly emerge at the end of the war by the agency of the Balfour Declaration; it had already existed for some time; it had been actively encouraged by the German Government even before the revolution, and negotiations to this effect were in fact conducted by me as Ambassador in Constantinople. It had been our purpose, had the war ended otherwise than, alas, it did, to have addressed a similar request to Turkey, which then ruled in Palestine. At that time, with the assistance of several gentlemen, who are now engaged upon this work to-day, I discussed these matters for weeks together with the Grand Vizier, and he always answered: 'I am quite ready to do what you want. But I warn you in advance that there will be difficulties with the Arabs.' I mention this because the Grand Vizier had proved himself a good prophet in this regard, though I wish he had not done so. Then came the issue of the war, which we unfortunately all know, and our intentions were taken over by England in the well-known Balfour Declaration, on which the mandatory rights of to-day are based.

"I would like here to remind you that it is expressly stated in the Balfour Declaration that the work in Palestine shall proceed without prejudice to the rights of the Jews in their present home. We who, as non-Jews, are concerned in this question have resolved from the outset that we will in no way interfere or become involved in the differences that may arise within the Jewish community on this problem. That is none of our business. I believe that all here, like myself, joined the Pro-Palestina

Committee solely because, after the Balfour Declaration, the Palestine question fell to be dealt with by the League of Nations, and I hope that all my countrymen will agree that since Germany has become a member of the League, and we have a seat on the Mandates Commission, it behoves us to share in every work of reconstruction, not merely where German claims are specially concerned, but in every case where cultural work is needed. And of such work, the reconstruction of Palestine, as here envisaged, is a pre eminent example. There are people who fear that a new nationalism may arise out of this movement. As I am speaking from a purely personal point of view, I should like to say that if there was here any question of the creation of a new nationalism and if indeed any idea of such a thing were in view, I should certainly not be standing here to defend it. For everyone knows that I have always stood for reconciliation and understanding between peoples. And I would never yield from this attitude. I am still firmly convinced to-day that for the success of the work in Palestine, it is necessary that the two populations who are settling and have settled in Palestine should come to terms. A reconciliation must follow, and that is one of the main objects of our labours.

"And that is really all I wanted to say. We who, as non Jews, are concerned in this work are specially glad that there is now a Jewish Agency, above all these differences, and in responsible charge of the work. We believe that in the future there will be a common co-operation of all who are interested in this question. And herein lies the hope that the reconstruction of Palestine, a cultural work of the first rank, may be successfully achieved.'

The German Pro-Palestine Committee suspended its labours in the spring of 1933. As far as I was personally concerned, I had, for reasons of health, had to give up all political activity eighteen months before.

When I look back on the six years during which, owing to my

good relations with Stresemann, it was my privilege to work on the League of Nations, it is mainly his personality that lends attraction to my memories. At Geneva Stresemann developed from an—always influential—Reichstag politician into a great statesman. He recognised the needs of the world and of his own Fatherland. But life did not grant him time in which to carry out his ideas. With longer life and better health the personalities of Stresemann and Briand might have achieved successes that were denied to them, until the evacuation of the Rhineland, though the lunatic postponement of this deprived it of all its moral value. Both statesmen were removed by illness and political enemies before they could achieve those resounding successes without which no statesman can maintain himself.

The enemies of Briand and Stresemann who subsequently triumphed seem to me to have little cause to be proud of what they have accomplished. While the two great statesmen were in power, there were indications that world reconciliation was on the way, while now the sole talk is of "Security," that is of a competition in armaments which in all the course of history has always led to a world war. Shortly before his death (1929), Stresemann, already very ill, came to Geneva for the last time, though he often deputed me to represent him. I remember one day particularly, when we were both invited by the President of the Council to the usual luncheon at the Hôtel des Bergues. After lunch I was called to the telephone, and found Stresemann in the hall of the hotel leaning against the wall almost unconscious. He asked me to go with him to the meeting of the Council, and then to take his place there, as he would not have the strength to last out a debate. I led him to his car, feeling that he might die in my arms at any moment, but he recovered a little in the air, when we had driven a little way together. However, I was still under the impression of this incident when Stresemann went away a few days later for a cure in some Swiss resort. When I found out the time his train left, I said to my wife: "Let us

hurry to the station or we shall never see Stresemann alive again." Perhaps it was the effect of his relief at escaping from the struggle at Geneva, but he felt relatively well at the time of departure, and laughed and joked as he usually did. His last words to me were: "We must spend another Christmas holiday together at Lugano."

Erich Koch Weser, the Democratic leader, went after him on the following day, by appointment, to see whether some working arrangement could not be established that might, at long last, unite the Liberal Parties. It was too late. Stresemann hardly survived the League Assembly, and there was no other man with the spiritual force to bring together the German middle class, which had already begun to lend its ears to other strains. "*Fistula dulce canit, volucres dum decipit auspex.*



SAYING FAREWELL TO STRESEMANN:  
GENEVA STATION, 1929



## CHAPTER VII

### DISARMAMENT

THE League of Nations is the "battlefield of two epochs," on which the historic action will be fought out between the new and the old conceptions of politics; on the one side, the idea of the sovereignty of a future ideal and international law as the guarantee of peace, and on the other, the policy of force which constitutes imperialism. Although this fight goes forward in all spheres of public life, the Disarmament question is the centre-point of the struggle, because the world has not yet reached the stage when, in the words of Walter Rathenau—"not armaments, but intellectual and economic forces have become the deciding instruments of international policy." The issue of this struggle will not be brought about through the League of Nations nor through Governments, but through the nations themselves. He who fights for disarmament at Geneva must be clear on this point. An essential condition for success in the struggle is the firm inner conviction that the nations want disarmament and will achieve it. The Governments, which are for the most part still involved in the ideas of imperialism, will not be in a position to undertake a serious programme of disarmament. But behind the Governments stand the masses, who to-day demand disarmament just as definitely as in earlier days they claimed and even fought for religious and political freedom. What the nations seriously want, they always get in the end, and Governments that oppose the will of nations have always been found wanting by the verdict of history. On that account we need not despair because disarmament is making no progress at all at present. The matter must be viewed *sub specie æternitatis*, though in the

daily conflict no chance of making an advance should be missed. My view is in no way altered by the fact that, just at the moment, there are an unusual number of dictatorial governments in the world. It must be once again remembered that the League is an assembly of diplomats, which proceeds in accordance with the instructions of the various Governments. Hitherto the Disarmament question has been discussed in the League, while the nations have only occasionally made their voices heard at elections.

The Disarmament question, as treated by the League, is by origin based on President Wilson's much-discussed Fourteen Points. In accordance with these, upon the conclusion of peace a measure of disarmament was to come into force, which was to allow individual States only such an armament as was needed for their internal security. It is common knowledge that at Versailles the Fourteen Points were almost wholly ignored. But disarmament, together with certain other important items in the Fourteen Points, appeared in the Treaty of Peace, and were anchored down in the League Covenant. It must to-day be regarded as the central problem before the League, because it is not conceivable how the League can in the long run exist and develop unless disarmament is established. The nations will never understand how an institution created to maintain peace can persist if it fails to make at least some preliminary progress towards disarmament. Disarmament is the proof of the States' regard for peace. Without this proof, the nations will believe neither in the League nor in peace.

At Versailles the demand for disarmament was so far watered down that in place of Wilson's Point the provision of Article 8 of the Covenant was substituted, by which national security and the geographical position of the various States were to decide the measure of their disarmament, thus making it easy for States that did not desire to disarm to find excuses for their reluctance. However, the demand for disarmament remained, and rested on

yet another basis that especially concerned us Germans. In the preamble to the fifth section of the Versailles Treaty it is expressly stated that the disarmament imposed upon us shall be the precursor of the like process in all other States. When I subsequently entered upon the Disarmament negotiations it was generally recognised by all the other participants that the demand for disarmament rested on these two foundations. Added to which, Clemenceau's Note of June 16th, 1919, immensely strengthened our claim that the other States must disarm, by stating unequivocally, in the name of the Allies, that our disarmament was the beginning to general disarmament.

There can, therefore, be no doubt that a binding obligation to general disarmament came into force when our obligation to disarm had been fulfilled. During the whole course of my negotiations no attempt was ever made to repudiate this international obligation. Only now and again was some effort made to seek, in the alleged slowness and reluctance of German disarmament, an excuse for the fact that general disarmament had made no progress.

Upon the conclusion of the Locarno Treaty the Preparatory Disarmament Commission was summoned, because there now seemed sufficient provision for security to enable disarmament to be taken in hand. It should here be mentioned that the earlier negotiations of the League, especially those over the abortive Geneva Protocol, had the result of constituting the trilogy: "Arbitration, Security, and Disarmament" as the guiding star of the League, as it was also the inspiration of the negotiations of the Disarmament Commission. To these negotiations were invited the States on the League more particularly interested, together with the United States, the Soviet Union and Turkey. The two latter States did not take part in the negotiations until later on.

The first discussions of the year 1926 were of a general nature. On the English-American side there was plainly a desire that the Commission should succeed. By way of exercising pressure it

was decided that the negotiations should be public, and the attempt was made to elect M. Paul Boncour as chairman, with a view to making him in a higher degree responsible for the success or failure of the Commission's labours. But he refused the position in order to keep his freedom of action. This last episode may seem trivial, but it throws a sinister light on the situation regarding disarmament. France dominated the Continent by virtue of her unequalled army and her political alliances, which violated the spirit of the League and were calculated to perpetuate the *ratio scripta* of Versailles. In actual fact, then, the question whether the world was prepared to disarm was a question addressed to France. It was in recognition of this circumstance that the Commission would gladly have elected the French representative as chairman, as this would have led to a quicker clarification of the political situation. History might very possibly have taken another course if we had been spared a few years of Disarmament negotiations. We were, in any event, nearest to disarmament when Paul Boncour delivered his speech of April 8th, 1927, in which he said. "Il est exact que le préambule de la partie V du Traité de Versailles vise les limitations d'armements imposées à l'Allemagne en tant que condition et précédent d'une limitation générale des armements. C'est même ce qui distingue de façon très nette cette limitation d'autres limitations semblables, qui avaient pu être imposées au lendemain des guerres, au cours d'histoire, et qui, d'ailleurs, s'étaient généralement révélées assez inefficaces.

'Cette fois, ce qui donne toute sa valeur à cette stipulation c'est qu'elle n'est pas seulement une condition imposée à l'un des signataires du Traité, elle est un devoir, une obligation morale et juridique faite aux autres signataires de procéder à une limitation générale.'

Since then Paul Boncour has often been called to order by influential circles in France on account of this speech. None the less, it remains one of the missed opportunities of history in the

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epoch of Versailles. On the German side, the principle of disarmament by stages was accepted, so the door to negotiations was open, had France been willing. I myself have subsequently often wondered whether satisfactory personal relations do not point the only way that may gradually lead to a Franco-German reconciliation. I was on friendly terms with Paul-Boncour, as Stresemann had been with Briand. This method is a slow one, but it is more hopeful than barking at each other like a couple of angry dogs, and making bad blood among other nations. Nor can it be said that the German military authorities disapproved of my methods, as is proved by the following letters from the Reichswehr Ministers with whom I had to deal.

*"The Reichswehr Minister.*

*Berlin. May 4th, 1927.*

**"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—**

"Having just received the report of the officers who were with you in Geneva, I venture to express my warmest thanks to you for the resolute and impressive fashion in which you represented our national and more especially our military interests in the course of the first stage of the labours of the Preparatory Commission which has just come to an end. While the negotiations were still proceeding, I was able, by the aid of newspapers and memoranda, to follow your important work with the warmest sympathy and agreement. The oral report of the military experts made a deep impression on me, and showed in what a harmonious and friendly fashion you had co-operated with my officers. And for this, too, I should like to offer you my hearty thanks.

*"With all good wishes, I am, dear Count, etc.,*

*"GESSLER."*

*"Berlin-Steglitz. 14.II.32.*

**"DEAR COUNT,—**

"On your seventieth birthday I take occasion to send you my warmest good wishes, and I am very mindful of your great

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"On your seventieth birthday I take occasion to send you  
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services during the preparations for the Disarmament Conference. As Reichswehr Minister I was in a special position to realise the enormous difficulties that you had to overcome. It is not least due to your good work that Germany's position on the Disarmament question has gradually strengthened, and that the international atmosphere has changed in our favour. May you enjoy health and long life to see the fruits of your labours come to maturity.

"With heartiest good wishes and sincere respect,

"I am, etc.,

"GROENER.'

In the six years during which I dealt with Disarmament at Geneva I became more and more inclined to the conviction that France would in no case disarm, whatever we might say or do. In accordance with the historic technique of diplomacy, I thenceforward regarded it as my sole duty to put myself in the right and my adversary in the wrong. At that time this was by no means impossible, as we had fulfilled the treaties and the French had not. It was their duty to begin the fulfilment of the obligation of disarmament, and on them falls the main responsibility for its non fulfilment, as well as for its historic consequences.

After the general negotiations in the year 1926, sub-commissions were appointed, of which the most important were two, one military and one economic; and of these the former worked much longer than the latter. The Military sub-Commission produced a comprehensive protocol after six months of intense activity. These labours on the part of the military experts gave rise to a good deal of amused comment. Soldiers are not indeed inclined to disarm, and there was, so far, some justification for comparing this Commission to a conference of shoemakers, who were expected to decide upon the abolition of shoes. On the other hand it must be remembered that Governments are in the habit of taking refuge behind their experts. If the soldiers had

not first gone into the question, the Governments would have said that they had not been provided with a military basis for disarmament. In so far, the protocol of the Military sub-Commission was of very great value. It contained a complete theoretic exposition of the whole Disarmament question, and from this memorandum the undeniable fact emerged that disarmament is technically possible and therefore practicable, as soon as the Governments took the political decision that it should be taken in hand.

When the work of the sub-Commissions had been concluded, the Preparatory Disarmament Commission met in the spring of 1927. Their deliberations were founded on two draft agreements, which were put forward on the English and the French side. Both drafts were considered at the first session, and the suggestion was that they should, then and there, be amalgamated into one. But it did not prove practicable to establish an agreed draft of an international Disarmament agreement at the first reading. Instead of this, a report was merely issued that set out the opposing views, which were to be harmonised as soon as possible at a second reading.

The task of adapting the report of the "Préparatoire" into a Disarmament Convention was, *de facto*, never carried out. However, except for a considerable loss of time, this did not matter very much, as the Disarmament Conference consigned all the material of the "Préparatoire" to its waste-paper basket.

In spite of its inglorious end, the five sections of the Report are deserving of mention for the light they throw on the Disarmament Convention.

The first section dealt with the strength of military forces, which would of course have to be reduced if disarmament was to become a reality. In this regard, the extent and methods of such reduction were matters of dispute. The French and German theses were here diametrically opposed, and at the outset we enjoyed both English and American support. In the German

view a Disarmament agreement did not deserve the name of such if the reduction did not extend to the men with the colours and to the trained reserve. France and her supporters opposed this attitude to the utmost. The French thesis proceeded on the assumption that disarmament would be carried out gradually by way of reduction of the period of military service until the militia system came into force in all continental States. On this thesis the reduction of the reserves is not possible, because the whole nation then belongs to the reserve. But anyone seriously desiring disarmament can hardly accept this thesis, because nowadays the reserve forms the backbone of land armies, and because it is very questionable whether present-day nations will put up with the general military service involved in a militia. The disarmament imposed upon us abolished universal military service. The disarmament specified in the treaty should have proceeded in the same fashion, the more so since, as we were so constantly being reminded, our system of defence at that time was such an admirable one. In any case the accomplishment of the French thesis would have prevented any serious disarmament for years, especially as the French definitely rejected any immediate reduction of the period of service or of the yearly contingent of recruits. The inequality of armaments would remain, and involve a consequent paralysis of the League, which by its very essence necessitates the equality of its members in order to function properly. Whatever may have happened since then, we were then anxious, and rightly anxious, to enter gradually into the system of disarmament. We have always expressed ourselves as ready to accept a procedure by stages, but the first stage would need to be a substantial one, and the ultimate aim clearly defined. If a system is imposed on us, and then, when general disarmament comes to be considered is turned down in favour of another, there can then, in the long run, be no equality between the members of the League, which is essential if the League is to prosper. Apart from all other reasons, the French

cling to the system of universal service, because any other system of defence might be a menace to the Republic.

The second section of the Report referred to material. This has such decisive significance in modern wars that disarmament without immediate reduction of material as a whole is unthinkable. Most States were disposed to limit only the material in use, and not to touch the stock held in reserve. Moreover, they were opposed to any immediate per-cent reduction of material, they proposed merely to diminish the budgetary provision for this purpose, a point which led to the third section, relating to the budget.

A reduction of armaments through a limitation of budgets was, in the German view, not possible, because there was too much dissimilarity in the system of armaments prevailing in the various countries. For example, the cost of an army like ours then was, consisting of professional soldiers, compared with the cost in countries with universal service, was so enormous that this sole instance sufficed to show that countries with different systems of defence could not be compared in regard to their army budgets. The budget may well be used as an accessory means of controlling disarmament, but not as the sole criterion, because this would certainly lead to completely false views.

The fourth section dealt with chemical warfare. At the Armament Trade Conference of 1925 it had already been decided to ban chemical and bacteriological warfare, but all the provisions of the Armament Trade Agreement have not yet been ratified. On the German side it should be our constant effort to secure that chemical, bacteriological and air warfare shall be prohibited. If this is not achieved, and if all our attempts to avert another war are unavailing, such a war is likely to be carried on in the air and with the products of the chemical industry. That means that the next war will not primarily, nor even mainly, be conducted by the military forces on both sides, but that the civil population, which cannot defend itself, will be

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much worse hit than the soldiers by the sufferings of war. If these methods of warfare were prohibited, there would be no more attempts at Geneva to restrict civil aviation in connection with disarmament. It is noteworthy that there has hitherto been the greatest disposition towards disarmament in the sphere of civil aviation, which could be completely uncontrolled if air warfare was forbidden. Disarmament should not be used to hinder technical progress, it should be directed exclusively against preparations for war.

The fifth section related to the organisation of disarmament. Here one point deserves special mention, which, although not a justification, at least provides an excuse for the fact that no results have hitherto been achieved in the question of disarmament. An agreed settlement of disarmament would certainly be a tremendous step forward in history, because by Article 8 of the League Covenant a State which has disarmed may never again arm without the approval of the League Council. The question of armaments would thereby be completely internationalised, and every State would surrender its hitherto most cherished sovereign right in favour of the League. It may well be conceived that States which have not been forcibly disarmed will struggle against the introduction of such an innovation. But once this provision has been embodied in the treaties, it must be carried out. Otherwise there will be a breach of a treaty. In this connection, there has always been a demand on the French side for a control of disarmament, although the English speaking nations were opposed to this and desired to base disarmament on faith and confidence. It seems improbable that a State which had signed a Disarmament agreement would incur the odium of violating it, quite apart from the fact that an automatic control would come into force by the agency of the working classes and would be sufficiently effective.

A few months after the first reading of the draft treaty, a second was to take place, which was in fact postponed for a

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considerable period, as a previous attempt was to be made to remove existing difficulties by inter-governmental negotiations. These were not so acute in the questions mentioned above, in which we were specially interested, as in the matter of naval disarmament. The great naval Powers demanded disarmament by categories of ships, while the small ones wanted to use global tonnage only as a criterion. Disarmament by categories would be a direct continuation of the Washington Conference. On that account the great naval Powers tried to come to an agreement at a meeting at Geneva in 1927, the so-called Coolidge Conference, but did not succeed because the Americans wanted more large cruisers and the English more small ones. Behind this conflict over the cruisers stood the great question of the so-called Freedom of the Seas, which had played so important a part during the world war, and which in practice involved the abolition of the right of taking prizes at sea, and of the blockade. According to the American Peace programme, even in war-time all merchant ships were to be allowed to sail the seas completely unmolested. This conflicted with the English historic tradition, and indeed with international law as existing to-day. On the other hand disarmament would never come into force in good earnest if the United States and England were not in agreement on the question, and then proceeded to exercise an appropriate pressure on the other States.

The League Assembly of 1927 had to meet without the Disarmament negotiations having achieved any result. It did indeed at least perform the service of declaring the connection between Security and Disarmament. Up to that date it was still often said that the existing security was not such as would justify the beginning of disarmament. However, after protracted conflicts in the Third Commission a resolution was then adopted which finally settled this question. By its terms a Security Committee was to be constituted, which was to deal with progress in Security; on the other hand it was decided that

disarmament should proceed by stages, that the first Disarmament Conference should take place on the basis of security as then existing, and that this first conference, which was to be followed by others, should be summoned as soon as possible, to decide on the extent of the first stage. Since that resolution, the obstacle to further labours did not lie in the Security problem but in the then existing concrete differences between the Powers.

The Disarmament Commission was accordingly summoned in December 1927, to constitute the Security Committee. The meeting was fixed so near to Christmas that there could be no question of the second reading of the draft treaty. At this session, therefore, nothing would have happened except the appointment of the Security Committee, had not the representatives of the Soviet Union appeared for the first time and thereby created a new situation. They promptly made very drastic disarmament proposals, the acceptance of which was of course out of the question, though it was not desirable that they should be rejected. The result was that my suggestion, put forward by way of compromise, was accepted, namely that the proposals of the Soviet representatives should come up for discussion simultaneously with the second reading of the draft agreement.

At that time the atmosphere at Geneva might well have been described in the words of Nietzsche as 'human all too human'. More especially when I think of the subsequent cordial relationship between Litvinov and Barthou and the consideration they both enjoyed in Geneva, I can only recall with amusement the fact that we Germans, and more particularly myself, were then the only people who had any friendly political and social intercourse with the Soviet representatives. To the dinner at which my wife and I entertained them, we could only invite Germans, no others would have come. The letter from Rantzau, quoted above belongs to this period.

Of quite an innocent nature was the almost daily jest which



WITH M. PAUL-BONCOUR: GENEVA

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## D I S A R M A M E N T

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By March of 1928 there was no inclination, except among the Soviet representatives and the Germans, to carry on the work, because the view had then become general that only diplomatic negotiations could lead to a result, and that it would therefore be a mistake to summon the Disarmament Commission. On the side of Germany, on the other hand, it was maintained that disarmament was a matter that concerned the League, which should not allow itself to be shifted into the background, and that the Disarmament Commission, since it consisted of representatives of the various Governments, would be just as competent as diplomatic organs. The general feeling was that the meeting of the Disarmament Commission should be postponed, but this was impracticable, as the Americans, the representatives of the Soviet Union, and latterly the Turks as well, had been invited. However, it had been agreed among the great majority of the Commission that the Soviet proposals should be referred to the various Governments, and that the meeting should then dissolve to await the results of diplomatic negotiations. Before these resolutions could be adopted, however, the Commission became the scene of a violent discussion of the policy of the Soviet Union in general, in the course of which their proposals were described as dishonourable, as a deliberate attempt to wreck



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Disarmament, and actually as *sabotage*. It was decidedly a mistake to treat the Soviet representatives in this fashion, for several reasons. because they had been invited by the League, because they had been repeatedly urged to join the League; because it had been constantly stated that disarmament was impossible without their co-operation, and because the Soviet Union had put forward very far reaching proposals for disarmament, as to the seriousness and good faith of which there could indeed be a difference of opinion. A reasonable assumption was that the Soviet representatives were seeking a spring board at Geneva, to emerge from their isolation, and that they could do without armaments, their weapon being propaganda. Against the latter the European Powers could best protect themselves if they could relieve their peoples of the burden of armaments. However this might be, the Disarmament Commission was not the place in which to start an exhaustive discussion of the Soviet Union as such. Everyone willing to disarm ought there to have been given a welcome. On that account it was the business of us Germans to be well-disposed to the Soviet proposals, although it was indeed clear that disarmament could not advance so rapidly as the Soviet representatives desired. Moreover, by the resolutions of the League we were committed to its method. On the other hand, Germany, as being totally disarmed, was not in a position to refuse any far reaching proposals, provided that they were put forward by a third party. Even if the treaties of Berlin or Rapallo had not existed, the German attitude at Geneva would have been the same, because there was here no question of high policy, so called, but merely of disarmament. The March session, in spite of my best efforts, ended in complete stagnation, and there was nothing to be done but to bring the question before the League Assembly of 1928.

However, at the March session an extremely important suggestion was put forward on behalf of Germany, which was



WITH ADMIRAL BARON FREYBERG AND BARON WEIZSACKER, GERMAN MINISTER  
AT THE PREPARATORY DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE



also referred to the various Governments for consideration. We demanded the unconditional publicity of all armaments, a demand that touched the heart of the matter. Section 6 of Article 8 of the League Covenant prescribes absolute publicity for all States in all armament questions, and that they shall keep each other mutually informed of all steps taken in this regard. Section 6 of Article 8 is a part of the peace treaties that has never been fulfilled, although there is no reason for this failure, as the obligation is not dependent on a condition of any kind. If the various States had been compelled, by acceptance of the German proposal, to declare openly and candidly what armaments they had, disarmament could quite easily have been achieved, because the reduction of armaments generally known, by ten, twenty, or thirty per cent, is a perfectly simple matter. But in the course of the negotiations, it became clear that the States which were less disposed towards disarmament were equally averse to publicity, for they recognised that this was a cardinal point of the whole question. The subsequent policy of the Soviets justifies the view I took of them at the time.

When the League Assembly met in September 1928, the prospects of disarmament seemed hopeless. On the German side, the opportunity was seized by Chancellor Hermann Muller to demand the speedy termination of the tedious negotiations, together with the convocation of the Disarmament Conference, and a substantial reduction of armaments. On the third Commission the view prevailed that the results of the diplomatic negotiations should be quietly awaited, and that it must be left to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission to convoke it, as soon as the negotiations had come to a favourable issue. For my own part I repeatedly emphasised that the Disarmament Commission and the first Disarmament Conference were the bodies before whom the question must be brought. These bodies were not to be summoned with the sole purpose of registering the result of diplomatic negotiations.

Finally Germany's contentions were met by the concession that the Disarmament Conference should in any case be summoned in the first half of 1929, and it was furthermore recognised that security as then existing admitted of the first stage of disarmament, but with the exception of ourselves, no one wanted to be responsible for summoning the first conference. On the strength of this decision, the Disarmament Commission did actually meet in the middle of April, although the diplomatic negotiations remained without result, and no one except ourselves and the Soviet Union wanted the work to continue.

In the meanwhile, after the Coolidge Conference had come to nothing, Anglo-French negotiations had taken place, which were so far successful that the French declared themselves ready to accept, with certain modifications, a limitation of naval armament by categories of ships, in return for which the English made the concession that the trained reserves of land forces should not be subject to limitation. But as, by the terms of this agreement, it was the large cruisers that were limited, while the small ones remained unaffected, the Americans expressed themselves as in strong opposition, whereupon the English declared it no longer valid, as it was only feasible if accepted by all parties. Having regard to this state of affairs no one believed that the Disarmament Commission could make any further progress. Naval armaments were not to be discussed, and on the other side the French adopted the standpoint that they were only prepared to consider a scheme of disarmament that simultaneously included disarmament on land, sea and air. This attitude always constituted an Anglo-French point of difference on the Commission, because the Americans upheld regional disarmament, which, from our point of view, involved the risk that the Americans, weary of the long procrastination, might one day transfer the naval negotiations to Washington and leave the European Powers to themselves—in other words, to militarism.

The session of the Disarmament Commission developed quite

otherwise than was expected, because the American President, Hoover, handed over the conduct of affairs to his representative, Gibson. Whatever may be thought of American tactics in individual cases, it was in any case all to the good that President Hoover should have transferred his Disarmament activities to the League Commission, thus excluding the possibility of any negotiations outside the League and exercising a moral pressure on the continental Powers. This moral pressure did, indeed, need to be a very strong one if it was to dam the course of European militarism. "*Vestigia terrent*," when one remembers Versailles, where American idealism so sorely underestimated the greed of European Imperialism, and so failed. To begin with, however, some result had to be achieved in the matter of naval disarmament, before any moral pressure could be practised for the purpose of leading to any considerable disarmament on land.

The Commission found little difficulty in realising that the time had now at last come when a second reading might be begun. The Commission took a much calmer view of the Soviet proposals than before, just as the Soviet representatives, for their part, made it clearer than before that they wished to maintain their relations with Geneva. A compromise formula was thus produced which did not merely reject the Soviet proposals but left it open to the Soviet representatives to bring up their suggestions individually, item by item, or *en bloc*, before the Disarmament Conference.

When the discussions then proceeded to the main questions of personnel and material, the Americans put forward the propositions that were, in fact, the outstanding feature of the session. On the question of naval armaments, Gibson stated that the United States, in the earnest desire to reach an agreement on the fleet question, were prepared to revert to a proposal, as a basis for discussion, which the French delegate Paul-Boncour had put forward at an earlier date. By its terms, within a global tonnage for every country, the tonnage for the individual ship

categories should be settled, together with a certain percentage figure that would be transferable from one category to another. Added to which, Gibson indicated the possibility of an American concession to England, in regard to the introduction of a new basis of valuation for cruisers. The American proposition produced cordial but non-committal replies from the representatives of the other States, but did not result in a thorough treatment of naval disarmament. The representatives of the sea Powers were indeed disposed to adjourn naval questions until the Governments had thoroughly considered the American suggestions, and it was so decided by the Commission.

As to the strength of the armed forces, Gibson stated that the United States adhered to the view that the trained reserves should be included in the disarmament on land, but that on this question, in which they were less interested, they would adopt the view of the majority, in order to reach an agreement on disarmament. At the time the French thesis held the field, and a German one, for the establishment of a basis of valuation for equating the systems of defence, fell to the ground.

Gibson expressed himself in similar fashion on the question of war material. Here, too, he stated at the outset that the United States would not insist on their contention that the stores of existing material, as well as those actually in use, must be included. On the other hand, he explained that he could not accept the view put forward by the French group that a reduction of the material in use should only proceed by way of a reduction of the budget. For this material only a direct reduction could be contemplated. As, therefore, on the question of material, no agreement was possible between the American and the French schemes, the question of material was finally excluded from discussion. No concessions of any sort were made on the French side.

As, in the German view, any Disarmament treaty could be no more than illusory if it did not deal with the standing forces,

the trained reserves, the material in use and in stock. Upon the occasion of a debate regarding the standing forces, I conceived the moment had come for me to withdraw in rather ceremonial fashion from the work of the Commission, since we should presumably be unable in due course to sign the agreement unless the Disarmament Conference could produce some more effective results. For its achievements up to date the majority of the Commission had to bear the sole responsibility.

There were several other questions for the Commission to settle: the Chinese proposal for the abolition of universal service and a truly drastic Disarmament proposal from Turkey. Both received honourable burial with the prospect of resurrection at the Disarmament Conference. The section regarding chemical warfare imposed on the participants in the Convention substantially the same obligations as had been undertaken by the signatories to the Geneva Gas War Protocol of 1925. An additional suggestion of mine, prohibiting bombing from the air, was rejected, as the Commission was not disposed to embody in the Disarmament Convention a ban on any individual methods of warfare.

The consideration of the remaining sections of the draft Convention, regarding budget questions and organisation, which included control and publicity, were, in conjunction with the naval questions, postponed to the second half of the session. The commission was to be again summoned by the President as soon as he took the view that the preparations for the naval questions had made sufficient progress.

This was not the case until the close of 1930, and the last session of the "Préparatoire," which then was held, proceeded wholly under the shadow of the London Conference. The interest of the Great Powers—more especially the United States and England—was so entirely set upon the establishment of the result achieved in London that no one could dispute my accusation that the majority of the Commission had sacrificed the

idea of disarmament by land to the interests of disarmament at sea. However, a formal conclusion was registered to the activities of the "Préparatoire."

This conclusion was almost the only positive result that can be put to the credit side of the Commission's account. And if such a formal conclusion was in fact reached, it was due to the German motions on the subject put forward at the previous League Assembly and at the Third Commission, but it was also obvious that each of the delegates was personally only too anxious to terminate as soon as possible his connection with a body that had gradually sacrificed the respect of world public opinion. Apart from the political antagonisms between the participant Powers, Disarmament was wrecked by the erroneous technique of the League machinery for debate. At the plenary meetings and on all the Commissions the speeches were too many and too long. No one should have been allowed to speak for more than ten minutes. This rule has been adopted on the League of Nations Unions with very good results. The agenda of the last meeting embraced the conclusion of a second reading of a draft Disarmament Convention, which had been left unfinished in May of the previous year, as well as the settlement of certain matters outside the draft. However, the Commission did not keep wholly within these limits, but a few important questions were again put up for discussion, upon which the majority had already reached a decision at the second reading. This was done from a feeling that a highly improbable rectification of previous resolutions might display the poor result of our common labours in a more favourable light. Thus, the limitation of war material was again brought up for discussion. In point of fact, the previous resolutions on this matter remained unchanged, but when a vote was taken on the question of a direct limitation of war material, the result on the first occasion was 9 votes to 9, which shows that, in that regard at least, a certain progress in our sense was not out of the question.

My attitude on the Commission was, on the one hand, determined by a statement I had made in the spring of the previous year, in which, as a result of the negative resolutions of the Commission on the questions of material and personnel, I had already clearly dissociated myself from its programme; on the other hand, I had to try, at every opportunity that offered, to assist in improving the draft Convention, as well as to join issue when it became necessary to set forth the reasons for our dissent, to defend ourselves against direct attacks, to clear up misunderstanding regarding our attitude, and finally to take care that our point of view was suitably and exhaustively embodied in the report of the Commission. I was also actively concerned with various matters not directly connected with the draft Convention, as, for instance, the question of the date of the Conference and the due collection of the necessary material in the shape of statements of armaments as then existing. I think I may say that my activity in this respect was sufficient to rebut the charge of passivity or even of obstruction, more especially as I let no opportunity pass of putting forward the main purpose of the Reich Government at that time, namely, to dispose of the Preparatory Commission as soon as possible, so as to make way for a general Conference.

As to the five sections of the draft agreement, I may make the following observations:

1. The question of personnel was decided in principle as early as the first part of the sixth session, and to our disadvantage; that is to say, the trained reserves were entirely excluded from the scheme of reduction or limitation; but in the course of the discussion of the question of the limitation of the period of service it was again debated. The result was, as before, negative, in our sense.

2. The question of material, as stated above, was opened up once more, though no majority could be obtained for the direct limitation of military material. The draft merely suggested that

the matter should be approached by way of the national budget, though, even so, the questions of quantity and kind were left untouched.

On the matter of naval material, my proposal to include all material not at sea, on the ground that it might be used at will to augment military resources was rejected. Only material at sea was to be subjected to direct limitation, on lines which strictly adhered to the provisions of the London Treaty. For this purpose the London sea Powers had turned down the existing draft proposals in favour of a scheme in conformity with the London Treaty, which was substantially accepted by the Commission. I took no active part in this debate.

On the matter of air material the Commission's resolutions fell equally far behind my proposals that all material should be included, a substantial agreement was reached for the inclusion of all airworthy aeroplanes and airships, on the basis of certain criteria.

The inclusion of civil aviation in the draft played an important part in this connection. From the very outset, and especially at the last session, I strongly urged that civil aviation had no place in an agreement of a purely military character. I took occasion to state expressly that civil aviation was the other sphere in which the majority of the Commission showed any definite disposition towards measures of limitation. I succeeded in getting my view point embodied in the Treaty almost in its entirety. The draft only touched on civil aviation in Article 37, in which certain annual publications on the subject were proposed. With the intention of getting this provision excluded, if I could, from the draft, I put forward the proposal for establishing an international agreement on this matter. My motive in so doing was that we were pledged to such publications by the terms of the Paris agreement of 1925, so that we could only support an agreement which—completely detached from the draft Convention of a military character—laid a similar obligation on the other States.

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3. The inclusion of budget statements in the draft was opposed by me, so long as the misleading utilisation of such figures for purposes of comparison or estimate of armaments was not precluded by a simultaneous direct limitation of material.

Section 4 was the only part of the Convention that dealt with the question of the complete prohibition of specific methods of warfare. I myself had used it at an earlier date, though unsuccessfully, to demand the complete prohibition of bomb attacks from the air. I now extended my proposal to other weapons of a definitely offensive character, and more especially dangerous to the civil population, such as heavy guns, for example; but my contentions were not accepted.

5. Upon the occasion of the debate on the concluding section of the draft, which contained the more general clauses, I confined myself to what was, for us, the most important point, the question of the relation of the convention to earlier agreements regarding disarmament. I explained that, when the article in question came up for discussion, so far as it did not involve the treaties of Washington and London, I should have to vote against the draft as a whole, because, as accepted by the Commission, it ignored certain important factors in land armaments, and tended to obscure the true state of the question, and even left the way open for rearmament. The German Government could hardly be called upon to sign such an agreement and in connection therewith to renew its signature of the Disarmament provisions of the Versailles Treaty. Germany would in due course judge of the value of the Treaty by the account it took of equality of security (*parité de sécurité*), as demanded by the German representatives for years past. This statement was all the more necessary as, by a French proposal upon the occasion of the second reading, subsection 2 was added to the Article, by which the adhesion of a number of States to the agreement was made dependent on the fulfilment of Disarmament clauses in the treaties of peace.

The concluding report of the Commission I was, on the other hand, able to accept, as it included, without exception, all the reservations I had put forward to the majority resolutions, and the arguments on which they were based, and thus made sure that the German viewpoint would be placed fairly and fully before the Conference.

My final statement gave me another opportunity to express my opinion of the work of the Commission and to point out that the draft was lacking in the one thing needful, namely, the determination to disarm, and that any genuine progress towards a solution of the question could only be expected from the forthcoming Conference if the various Governments, under pressure from public opinion, furnished their representatives with quite other instructions than had been the case for the Preparatory Disarmament Commission.

The two questions discussed outside the draft Convention—a full disclosure of the existing state of armaments by the time the Conference should begin its work and proposals to the Council as the date of the said Conference—originated with suggestions made by me. They were referred to the Council for decision. As regards the proposal for publicity, which was also supported by the Italian delegate, I pointed out that the success of the London Conference was largely due to the fact that, from the very outset, the members had been provided with an appropriate document which gave them a clear view of the armaments of all the participant nations. As a date for the Conference to begin I proposed November 5th, 1931, and took occasion to refer to a resolution of the Council of December 1926, in which it was expressly stated that the Commission should make proposals to the Council regarding the date of the Conference. The date named by me—November 5th 1931—was, having regard to the oversea participants, the diplomatic negotiations that would still be needed, and the meeting of the League Council in September, the earliest that could be

seriously put forward. The Commission refused to commit itself to a definite proposal as to date, but did at least consent to place all material before the League Council in January 1931, so that the date could be then determined.

The Soviet delegation, especially so long as it was headed by Litvinov in person, displayed great activity, which for the most part coincided with our interests. In positive co-operation it went further than before, and even took part in the sub-Commissions. None the less, at the end of the meeting it thought fit to dissociate itself formally from the work of the Commission as a whole, in so far as to disclaim any share in the report, although the Soviet reservations were therein embodied in full, and insisted that its dissentient statement should be conveyed to the Council as an annex to the report. At the debate I suggested that there should be a minority report by the Soviet delegation. It was finally agreed that the protocol of the final meeting, which contained the Russian statement together with all the speeches made, should be sent to the Council with the report.

At the last meeting of the Commission Lord Cecil represented Great Britain, as he had done during the first years of its labours. With him I had long established friendly relations dating from our common work for the League Unions. He also showed himself very well-disposed to me when I went to Geneva as a private person on behalf of the German Union when Germany had not yet joined the League. From that time I could always detect a touch of the mentor in his attitude towards me. He was not at all pleased when I had to oppose his views on the Commission. I tried as often as I could to lend a humorous turn to our antagonisms. Cecil was more especially disapproving of my good relations with Litvinov. At a small luncheon party to which he invited me one day he greeted me with the words: "Hello, Bernstorff, how is your friend Litvinov to-day? I suppose you call him by his Christian name?" I

## THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT BERNSTORFF

promptly replied. "No, by his Jewish name," and had the laugh on my side.

If the report of the "Préparatoire" presents the German stand point in objective fashion, that is largely due to the two men who drew it up: Cobian, the Spaniard, and Bourquin, the Belgian.

I had made up my mind that the conclusion of the labours of the "Préparatoire" was to be the conclusion of my political career. But I took part in the League Assembly of 1931, and represented Curtius at its last meetings. These were devoted to the Sino-Japanese conflict, which was then acute, and in which I was much interested, though Germany was but little concerned. I was also charged by the Foreign Ministry to continue these negotiations after the conclusion of the League Assembly. I would gladly have done so, but my health then began to fail as the result of the many agitations of my long political career. After fifty years' work in the service of my country, I was now compelled to obey the dictates of my health.

'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it. —*Ecclesiastes, 12:7*

THE END

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